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THE CHILDHOOD OF RELIGIONS

EDWARD CLODD

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THE

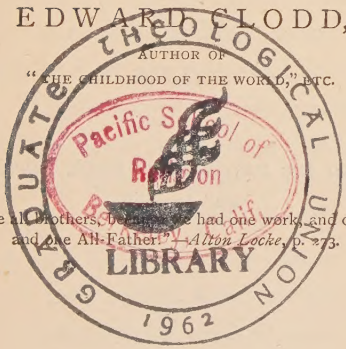
CHILDHOOD OF RELIGIONS.

BY

EDWARD CLODD,

AUTHOR OF

"THE CHILDHOOD OF THE WORLD," ETC.



"We are all brothers, because we had one work, and one hope, and one All-Father!" *Alton Locke*, p. 273.

NEW EDITION.

Revised throughout, and partly re-written.

LONDON

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NOTE.

This book has been translated into Dutch, Finnish, Italian, and Swedish.

PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

THE abandonment of the old and favourite theory of the Asiatic origin of the Aryan or Indo-European peoples, and the acceptance of the theory of their European origin, by the best authorities, has rendered a large part of this book obsolete, and has caused me to seriously consider the desirableness of withdrawing it from further circulation.

But the fact that it still keeps in steady demand has decided me to mend it rather than to end it. Consequently, those portions which are now out of date have been cancelled; new chapters on the Aryan culture and religion and on the religion of the Celts and Teutons have been added, and the rest of the work revised, so as to bring it into accord with our present knowledge. The materials for these changes have been drawn mainly from the works of Schrader, Penka, Canon Isaac Taylor, and Professor Rhys Davids, and from the valuable *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* of Messrs York Powell and Vigfusson.

E. C.

ROSEMONT, TUFNELL PARK, N.,
March 1891.

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CONTENTS.

CHAP		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTORY	1
II.	LEGENDS OF THE PAST ABOUT THE CREATION	10
III.	CREATION AS TOLD BY SCIENCE	29
IV.	LEGENDS OF THE PAST ABOUT MANKIND	44
V.	EARLY RACES OF MANKIND	54
VI.	THE PRIMITIVE ARYANS—	
	A. THEIR HOME AND CIVILIZATION	65
	B. THEIR RELIGION	88
	C. THEIR MYTHOLOGY	105
VII.	THE ANCIENT CELTIC AND TEUTONIC RELIGIONS	114
VIII.	THE ANCIENT AND MODERN HINDU RELIGIONS	142
IX.	THE ANCIENT RELIGION OF PERSIA	165
X.	BUDDHISM	177
XI.	THE RELIGIONS OF CHINA	196

CHAP.		PAGE
XII.	THE SEMITIC NATIONS	207
XIII.	MOHAMMADANISM, OR ISLAM	211
XIV.	ON THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE	237
	CONCLUSION	248

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.	*On the likeness between certain Chaldean and Jewish legends*	261
B.	*On the origin of the Solar System*	264
C.	*On the punishment of animals and lifeless objects as the cause of injury to Mankind*	265
D.	*On human and other sacrifices at the laying of foundations of buildings*	267
E.	*The sacred books of Hinduism*	271
F.	*On the words Brahmă or Brahm and Brahmâ*	277
G.	*The sacred books of the Pârsî religion*	278
H.	*Legends relating to the birth of Buddha*	280
I.	*The sacred books of Buddhism*	282
K.	*The sacred books, or Classics, of the Chinese*	284
INDEX		287

THE

CHILDHOOD OF RELIGIONS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

A POET who has put many wise and homely thoughts into verses full of music, once wrote some lines on the birthday of a great and good man, whose life's delight was in listening to all that Nature has to tell, and who, a few years ago, passed away from earth, leaving us the example of an honoured, because useful, career.

The poem tells us that as the boy lay in his cradle,

> 'Nature, the old nurse, took
> The child upon her knee,
> Saying: "Here is a story-book
> Thy Father has written for thee."
>
> '"Come wander with me," she said,
> "Into regions yet untrod;
> And read what is still unread
> In the manuscripts of God."

'And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

'And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale.'

It is some fragment of the wonderful story 'without an end' to which Agassiz (for it is he of whom Longfellow speaks in the poem) listened so gladly, a story as true as it is wonderful and as beautiful as it is true, that I want to tell you, if you too wish to open your young eyes to the sights that ever grow more charmful, and your ears to the sounds that give forth no unsweet notes; otherwise the story is not for you.

To learn well the lessons which Nature is ever willing to teach, we must begin while we are young, for then the memory is 'wax to receive and marble to retain.' The mind, like a knife, quickly rusts if it be not used. Unless the eye is trained to see, it becomes dim; unless the ear is trained to hear, it gets dulled; and this is why so many, careless to sharpen their wits on the whet-

stone of outlook and thought, enter into life and pass away from it, never knowing in what a world of beauty, of bounty and of wonder they have lived.

So I would have you treasure the joy which earth and heaven yield as riches that no moth or rust can corrupt nor thief break through and steal; that make the poorest boy who smiles his thanks for the bit of blue sky that roofs the murky court in which he lives, happier, and therefore wealthier, than the richest lord whose sunlit acres of woodland and meadow call from him nothing but a yawn.

I think you will be interested in listening to a few curious stories in which men of old have striven to account for the universe, how it all began to be and what keeps it going. Some of these stories have come to light only during the last few years, and this through the patient labours of learned scholars, who have found them buried in the sacred writings of certain ancient religions. We will then see what our men of science have learned from the story-book of Nature about the earth's history in the ages long, long ago, when as yet no life was upon it;

when no children, with eyes laughter-filled, made nosegays of its flowers, and ran after the jewels which they were told lay sparkling where the rainbow touched the ground; but when the Power whom no man hath seen was fitting it to be the abode of teeming forms of plant and animal life.

Following the same sure guides into that dim old past, we will learn a little of the mighty changes which, wrought by fire and water, have given to the earth's face its rugged, ragged outline, and also a little about the strange creatures that lived and struggled and died ages before the highest creature, man, appeared. Then after telling how the earliest races of men slowly covered large parts of the earth, the way will be clear for an account of the leading peoples who have spread themselves over nearly the whole of Europe, over large portions of Asia, and, since its discovery by Columbus, of America. We will learn something about the life their forefathers lived while together in one home, the language they spake, the thoughts that filled their breasts, and how those thoughts live on among us and

other peoples in many shapes, both weird and winsome.

I must stay here a moment to say that only a very little of what is now known concerning the matters already spoken of has been gathered from books. Men of science, wistful to learn more of that long before out of which we have come, have deemed none of its relics too trifling for their study. They have searched on the slopes of valleys through which rivers once flowed for the stone tools and weapons wherewith the first men worked and fought, and explored the caverns which from early times gave shelter to man and beast; they have opened great earth-mounds and tombs for remains of the dead laid within them; they have spelled out the picture-words painted on the walls of temples choked with the drifted sand of centuries, the wedge-shaped letters cut on rocks and stamped on sun-dried bricks, also the writing on crumbling papyri, dried palm-leaves, barks of trees and other substances; they have traced words in common use to the roots from which they sprang, and fairy tales and legends to the homes where many of them were born; and

thus have come to us, in ways undreamed of by our forefathers, rich treasures of knowledge.

Lastly, though by no means the least, we will open some of the sacred books of India, Persia, China, Arabia and other lands, to see for ourselves what the wisest and best of the ancients have thought about this wondrous life and what is to come after it. For *thought* rules the world. It makes no noise, but lives on and reigns when all the bustling and the shouting that seemed to stifle it are hushed, and whilst the great works which it guided the hand of man to do have perished, or remain to tell of pomp and glory gone for ever, it is with us in the words of wisdom that 'shall not pass away,' and to which we do well to give heed.

I have said how much life gains in *joyfulness* if our ears be kept open to the sweet voices of nature, and our eyes awake to its lovesome sights, and I would add how much it gains in *hopefulness* and *sympathy* by even a slight knowledge of the various religions which at this day feed the soul-hunger of hundreds of millions of our fellow-creatures. We learn therefrom—

'That in all ages
Every human heart is human;
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not;'

so that when we read how poor wild souls, crouching with dread before the unknown, or craving after what seems higher and better to them, are not able to rise above the worship of bunches of feathers or piles of stones, or above ghastly offerings at rude shrines, or to man-god or demon, we shall know that they are, in their own way, satisfying a craving after the Being whom men of higher degree call God.

It gave men larger and worthier views of God when they learnt that the earth is one among many bodies circling round the sun, and that the sun himself is one of numberless suns that are strewn as star-dust in the heavens, and it will give each of us a larger hope that 'good shall be the final goal of ill,' to learn that our religion is one among many religions, and that nowhere is there a race without some form of belief, however coarse and rude.

To use a homely figure, we shall see that the

religions of the world are like human faces, all of which have something in common; nose, eyes, mouth, and so on; while all differ, some being more beautiful than others. And we shall also see that wherever any religion exists which has struck its roots deep down into the life of a people, there must be some truth in it which has nurtured them, and which is worth the seeking. For the hunger of the soul of man can no more be satisfied with a lie, than the hunger of his body can be appeased with stones. I am most wishful to impress this upon you, because you will never read the meaning of this world aright if you are content with that half-knowledge of the beliefs of other races, both savage and civilized, which most people have, and which suffices to give only false ideas of those beliefs.

Remember that where ignorance is, there is darkness; but that where knowledge dwells, light abides; and as knowledge, which comes only from the study of man and his dwelling-place, the world, 'grows from more to more,' sunnier views of life make glad the heart, chasing away the

false ideas about God that frightened poor timid, tender souls; that made even strong men shake, and bring their noble powers, tied and bound, before the grim Being whom they were taught to fear.

CHAPTER II.

LEGENDS OF THE PAST ABOUT THE CREATION

In every land and age man has looked up to the great, silent heaven, with its unresting sun, moon and stars ; and upon this earth, with its robe of many folds and colours, and asked, 'Did these things make themselves ? Had they a Maker ? If so, how did He make them, and how long ago ? What can He be like ?' And the questions have had all kinds of answers framed to meet them, and not a few strange stories woven to explain the hard matter.

It is well known to you that among many beliefs, now found to be wrong, which were held in bygone days, people thought that the earth was a flat and fixed thing, for whose sole benefit the sun shone by day and the moon and stars by night. Now, such a belief as this is no matter for wonderment, because it was the only belief then possible. People must speak of things as

they appear, and we still talk of the sun rising and setting, although we are sure he does nothing of the kind. If you had not learnt anything from books and other helps about the roundness of the earth and its movements in space, and had been shut up all your life in some wide plain where no hills broke the long, low line around, and gave you a sight, let us say, of the sea hiding in the distance the hulls of ships, you would have believed the earth to be flat and fixed, and lighted by the sun travelling daily across the sky, because your senses led you to such belief. Neither could you have learnt anything of the vastness and distance of the sun and stars, and you might have made the most simple guesses about these matters, as did some of the wise Greeks. One of them said that the moon was as large as that part of Greece once known as the Peloponnesus, but now called the Morea, and was laughed at for his boldness; while another held that the pale belt of light which is named, from a pretty myth, the Milky Way, and which we know consists of millions of stars, of which our sun is one, was the place where the two halves of the sky are joined

together. And it was a very long time before people would believe that there were millions of mankind who were walking with their feet opposite to ours on another part of the earth.

But as the mind of man searched deeper into things most of them were found to be other than they seemed, and thus all truer knowledge as to what they are has been gained by slow and sure correction of that which the senses first told about them. It would fill a bigger book than this to tell through what paths of darkness and danger the master-spirits of old cut their way to light, amidst what silence and fear they worked, and with what trembling they told their discoveries to a trusted few, but the story is one you will do well to study. And now let us look at a few of the old legends about the beginning of things. They are for the most part but little known, and although the forms in which some of them are cast are crude and foolish, they are worth more than a smile. They were very real to those who framed them, and the wise will gladly find in them this truth : that in the presence of the great fact of earth, sea and sky, man has seen a greater

fact than they, even a Cause without whom they had never been, a Cause to whom he has given many a different name and paid worship in many a strange fashion.

The spirit in which these early guesses at truth should be read is well enforced in this story, which comes from an ancient book added to one of the Vedas or sacred books of the Hindus.

A father tells his vain-minded son, in whom no sense of wonder dwells, to bring him a fruit of the huge banyan-tree or Indian fig-tree. 'Break it,' said the father; 'what do you see?' 'Some very small seeds,' replied the son. 'Break one of them; what do you see in it?' asked the father. 'Nothing, my father,' answered the son. 'My child,' said the father, 'where you see nothing there dwells a mighty banyan-tree.'

By way of comparing them with the stories which follow, it may be well to set down in simple outline the two accounts of the Creation which are given in the Book of Genesis.

In the *first account*, which is contained in chap. i. 1, to chap. ii. 3, we are told: 'In the

beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'

On the *first* day light was created and divided from the darkness, thus causing day and night.

On the *second* day an expanse was formed above the earth, dividing the waters upon the earth from those which were to be stored as rain. (As Genesis vii. 11 shows, this expanse or dome was believed to be full of windows, which were opened whenever it was needful to let the rain through. The notion that the sky is a great roof covering-in a flat world is an idea easily framed by the unlearned ; the Polynesians, for example, call foreigners ' heaven-bursters,' as having broken in from another world outside.)

On the *third* day the remainder of the waters were gathered together as seas, and the land was made to bring forth grass and herb and tree.

On the *fourth* day God made two great lights, the sun and moon : ' He made the stars also.'

On the *fifth* day He peopled the waters with fishes and the dome above with birds.

On the *sixth* day the work of creation was ended by the earth bringing forth four-footed

beasts and creeping things; man and woman, as the last and chiefest, being made 'in the image of God,' Who looked upon all that He had made, saw that it was good, and on the *seventh* day rested from His work.

The *second account*, which is given in Genesis ii. 4 to the end, speaks of the earth as without water and plants and trees, because there was no rain and not a man to till the ground.

Then the earth was watered by a mist, and man was made of the dust of the ground by the Lord God, Who breathed into his nostrils the breath of life so that he 'became a living soul.'

Man was then placed in the garden of Eden with leave to eat of the fruit of every tree except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Then beasts and birds were made and brought to Adam that he might give them names. Last of all, the Lord God made a woman from a rib taken from Adam's side while he slept.

At this point you may ask, How are we to read these and other Bible stories? What they tell us about the creation, the early state of man, the

universe in which we live, the age of the earth, and other kindred matters, differs so very much from what lesson-books on these subjects teach, that we feel puzzled which to believe.

The answer which I will try to give to this question before we pass on to the other legends may save you the irksome work of unlearning much in after years which is often taught upon these matters.

Since that which has to be said about one Bible legend applies to all the rest, we will deal with those already given about the Creation.

In bygone years people believed every word of those legends to be true, and there is a large number who still believe this, strangely overlooking the fact that the account given in the first chapter of Genesis of the mode and order in which things were made differs from the account given in the second chapter, and therefore that one of them must be wrong. After a time the Bible story seemed to be contradicted by the witness of those remains of the past which are found deep down in the earth, and although many books have been written with the view of showing that there is no

real contradiction, each has failed to prove this. For this reason others have cast aside the narratives in Genesis as idle and meaningless tales which common sense and science alike bid us reject. From this you will see that *three* different views are held, upon each of which somewhat must be briefly said.

1. There are those who believe that God made all things in six days, that He fixed the sun and moon in the sky on the fourth day after the shedding forth of light and between the creation of plants and animals, because they find it thus written in the Bible.

Now it is not wise to accept anything as true *only* on the ground that we find it in a book, because if it turns out that the writer of the book was mistaken, that his knowledge is imperfect and his statements opposed to facts, the foundation upon which our belief rests is taken away and the belief goes with it. In reading books on history, science and any other subject, we believe that the writers have set down to the best of their knowledge all that can be said upon the matter

and we are glad to learn what they have to tell us, and, since very few have either time or talent to search for themselves, to rely thereon. But we are none the less ready, as are the writers themselves, to give up all if it is proved to be wrong, and to welcome the newer knowledge which the ages bring.

That we must apply this to the reading of the Bible I have sought to show at page 237. The unknown authors of Genesis, who it is thought compiled that book from older writings, and to whom the legends of other nations were known, as the likeness between the Jewish, Babylonian and Persian testifies, speak of the earth as made before the sun, and as arched over by a solid firmament. It was to them a flat thing that moved not, and since no voice has ever come from the unseen to instruct man in things which he can find out for himself, these writers were not wiser than the wisest of the age in which they lived. But the round earth was none the less moving in its course at the rate of nineteen miles in every second of time, else spring and summer, autumn and winter, had not then been.

If among the different sacred books of the world,

for which, as will be seen hereafter, the same claims to be inspired every word are made by those who believe in them, there was one book quite free from mistakes and into which no blunder could by any means enter, we would gladly learn of it, since the truth-seeking can have but one desire, namely, to know what is true. But none such has ever existed, and never will exist, because every book is the work of man and therefore liable to error. That which is written on the rock-ribbed earth is alone free from the defects which appertain to all man-made things.

2. Those who hold that there is no real difference between the statements of the Bible and the facts of science, argue that when God is said to have made the heaven and earth in six days, it is not days of twenty-four hours each that are meant, but 'ages' or 'periods' of unknown yet vast duration.

We must all admit that it is very dangerous to force any meaning into words which, by unsettling what the user of them intended to convey, destroys their plain intent. They are far too sacred to

have tricks played with them, and to give words more than one meaning is to make them mean whatever the fancy invents,

> 'For what the lips have lightly said,
> The heart will lightly hold.'

There can be no doubt that days are meant as such in Genesis, since to each day a 'morning' and an 'evening' is given (see chap. i., ver. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), and this, together with the fact that the appointment of the seventh day of the week as the Jewish Sabbath was based upon the hallowing of that day by God, proves that 'periods' and suchlike words which convey no idea of fixed lengths of time were not in the writer's mind.

The use of the number seven reminds us that certain numbers were accounted sacred by ancient nations, and that the old mystery about them still survives in foolish and unreasoning fears, and in proverbs as to the luck or ill-luck that attends them. The early worship of the sun, moon and five planets may explain the choice of seven as a sacred number among some eastern and western peoples, and so also may the apparent changes in

the shape of the moon, known as her *phases*, which every seven days bring with them, and which account for the very early division of time into weeks.

This sacredness seems to have linked itself to the tradition of a creation in seven days and to the frequent use of that number in the Bible; these in their turn linking it to many legends of the Middle Ages, while the stories of seven sleepers, seven wise men, seven wonders of the world, and so on, also show what importance was given to it in olden times.

3. It is not wise or well to cast aside the Bible story. We can afford to be just to the past, and our debt to it is greater than we can pay, since its guesses made possible the sure knowledge of our time. However childish the ancient explanations of things may seem to us, they were the best that could be had. They were the work of honest men who, were they living now, would gladly correct their narratives by the great discoveries of these latter days. And those narratives contain for all time this truth, that every effect has a cause, and that this 'mighty sum of things for ever speak-

ing' witnesses to a Power able to produce and shape all to its own ends; a Power to which men give the name of GOD.

Therefore despise not the old because it is old, neither reject the new because it is new, but value each record of the past for the measure of truth which may be therein, since if it have none of that, it will perish, no matter how many believe it, nor with what shouts they strive to stifle the voices of those who believe it not.

Now we will pass on to other legends, beginning with the **Babylonian,*** the wild and ugly features of which are in strong contrast to the simpleness and quiet dignity of the story in Genesis. This legend, which is no doubt correctly given, comes to us through a Babylonian priest named Berosus, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great. The legend of the creation in the old Phœnician religion closely resembles it.

There was a time in which all was darkness and water. From these came hideous creatures; winged men, men with the legs and horns of goats;

* See Note A.

bulls with human heads, and suchlike monsters. Over all these was a woman, goddess of nature and mother of all beings, whom Belus, the chief of the gods, cut in two, making of one half the earth, and of the other half the sky. This caused the monsters to die, as they could not bear the light, upon seeing which Belus cut off his own head, and the gods then mixed the blood that flowed therefrom with the dust of the earth and formed man, which accounts for his sharing in the divine nature. Belus afterwards made the sun, moon, stars and five planets.

In the ancient religion of the Egyptians there is a legend that the sun wounded himself and that from the stream of his blood he created all beings.

Persian legend: from the sacred book of the Pârsîs, known as the Zend-Avesta. The Eternal Being produced two great gods, one named Ormuzd, King of Light, who remained true to him; the other named Ahriman, King of Darkness, who became the author of evil.

To destroy the evil, Ormuzd was appointed to create the world, which was made to last 12,000

years. He formed the firm vault of heaven and the earth on which it rests, and dwelt at the top of a mountain so high that it pierced the upper sky and reached the source of light. He then made sun, moon and stars to aid him in his battle with the terrible power of darkness; the universe being thus created in six periods; man, as in Genesis, last of all. The beautiful trust that dwelt in the heart of the pure-souled founder of the old Persian faith that good would in the end gain the victory over evil, will appear hereafter in the account of that religion.

Hindu legend: from an important book of the Brahman religion, called the Laws of Manu, the first part of which treats of Creation.

The universe was in darkness when Brahma (which means *force*), himself unseen, dispelled the gloom, first producing the waters and causing them to move. From a seed which he had placed in them there came a golden egg blazing with a thousand beams, and in this egg Brahma gave birth to himself. There he dwelt and at last

split the egg in halves, one of which became the heaven and the other the earth.

(The Finns believed that heaven and earth were made out of a divided egg, the upper half being heaven, the yolk being earth, and the white fluid the all-surrounding ocean).

Brahma then drew forth mind and created a number of smaller gods and wise men, who in their turn created animals and demons, clouds, mountains and rivers.

You have doubtless heard of the Hindu notion that the earth rests upon animals standing one upon another, four elephants being placed lowest of all, because their legs *reach all the way down!*

Scandinavian legend:

'Once was the age
When all was not,
Nor sound nor sea
Nor cooling wave.
Nor earth there was
Nor sky above,
Nought save a void
And yawning gulf,
But verdure none.'

To the south of this yawning gulf there was a region of flame, and to the north an abode ice-cold and dark. Torrents of venom flowed from the north into the gulf and filled it with ice, but the fire came from the south, and, falling upon the ice, melted it. From the melted drops there arose the giant Ymir, who, wicked himself, had a wicked family of frost-giants. A cow was also formed from the melted ice, and she not only fed the giants with her milk, but out of the stones covered with salt and hoar-frost licked a man of strength and beauty, whose son became the father of Odin, Vili and Ve. These three slew Ymir, and out of his flesh they formed the earth; from his blood the seas and waters, from his bones the mountains, from his hair the trees, from his skull the heavens, from his brains the floating clouds, and from his eyebrows a wall round the earth to guard them from the giant sons of Ymir, whose anger they feared.

Then they took the sparks and hot cinders cast out of the burning world in the south, and set them in heaven to give light as the sun, moon, and stars. And the sun warmed the cold earth,

and green things appeared. But neither sun, moon, nor stars knew their place, so the gods took counsel together and appointed to each its station. And they gave a name to the new moon and to the waning moon, to the morning, the forenoon, the midday, and the evening, so that the children of men, the sons of time, might be able to reckon the years. Night was a dark giant, but Day was fair and beautiful. To each of them Odin gave a horse and car, so that they might travel through the heavens. The horse that Night drove bedewed the earth with the drops from his bit every morning, and the horse that Day drove lighted earth and heaven with his shining mane. At the end of heaven the giant Hraesvelg sits in the form of an eagle, and the flapping of his wings makes the wind.

Greek legend: from the Theogony, or 'Origin of the Gods,' said by some to be one of the works of Hesiod, an ancient poet. The Greek priests and wise men revered it greatly.

In the beginning there was huge and formless Chaos, from whom came Gaia, the broad bosomed

earth, and Tartarus, dark and dim, below the earth. Then appeared beautiful Eros, or Love. From Chaos also came night and darkness, from these ether and day, whilst the earth gave birth to Uranus, the all-surrounding, starry heaven, and to the mountains and the sea. Then Gaia and Uranus married, and from them sprang demigods and men.

When you know more of the ancient peoples who worked out their thoughts about earth, sky and living things in such varied shape, and have learned amidst what different scenery each lived ; how Frost and Fire had fierce unending battle, and the Ice-Giant his hearthless home where the hardy Norsemen dwelt ; how sunshine and shadow made beautiful the well-wooded land of mountains and streams in the bright south where the Greeks dwelt ; you will understand why one legend should impress us by its rugged grandeur and another enchant us with its stately grace.

CHAPTER III.

CREATION AS TOLD BY SCIENCE.

You have been taught that the earth is one of a number of *planets* (so called from a Greek word meaning *to wander*) which, with other bodies, travel round the sun, he being the centre of what is called the *solar* system (from Latin *sol*, the sun). Astronomy primers will tell you that every star is a sun, the centre of a solar system, and that our sun appears so large and bright because he is the star nearest to us.

It is believed that the particles of matter which compose the solar system (and what has now to be said applies to the formation of every other solar system) were once in a gas-like state, and in the vast space over which they were spread, so distant from one another as to be at rest. In the course of countless ages the immense mass became cooler through radiation, or loss of heat into space, and the particles were drawn closer to-

gether, and brought into a spinning motion, so that they became a huge self-shining, highly-heated mass, somewhat ball-shaped. The motion was quickened as the particles became more united, but when the energy which swept them past the centre of the entire mass was greater than the force which dragged them towards it, rings of the outermost portion were thrown off one by one, which continued the wheel-like motion of the mass from which they had been cast. Each ring became broken at the points where the particles had clustered thickest, and these fragments, still spinning, gathered each round its centre, and threw off rings in like manner.

The huge ball in the centre of the whole became the *sun*, the ring fragments became the *planets* with their twofold motion, one top-like, the other round the sun; and the rings cast from them became their *moons*; each of these bodies being in a molten state. In the case of Saturn not only were eight moons formed, but there remain revolving round him the rings which so add to his beauty as an object in the telescope, and which are said to be made up of countless bodies.

The *comets* and streams of *meteors* which belong to our solar system were probably outlying fragments and smaller masses of the broken rings.*

Each body; sun, planet, moon, meteor, became globe-shaped in obedience to a law of the universe known as *attraction* (from Latin words meaning *drawn towards*). It is the law by which the dewdrop, the tear that falls from the eye, the melted lead dropped from the top of a tower where shot is made, become round. The little particles draw closely together, and in so doing arrange themselves around the centre, to which they are each *attracted*.

It is an important help to a clear understanding of the history of the earth to know what ground there is for the statement that each body of the solar system was in a molten condition.

Now there are certain energies in nature, such as light, heat, electricity, &c., each of which can produce, or be produced by, the rest. From this it has been concluded that they are different forms or modes of *one* unknown power that cannot be destroyed.

* See Note B.

Thus, to borrow an illustration of what is meant: In the case of a church spire struck by lightning, the energy passed from the cloud to the spire-cross as *light;* ran down the metal as *electricity* ; melted it as *heat;* then burrowed through the stone-work till it got to metal again, splitting the stone in its course as *motion;* found the metal and ran harmlessly down it as *electricity,* but changing in its course probably the positions one to another of the atoms composing the metal, as *magnetism;* and then burst through the stone-work again as *motion,* so injuring the spire throughout that it had to be pulled down and re-built.

Therefore heat is not a substance, a subtle fluid, as was once thought, but a motion among the particles of matter. Bodies do not become heavier when they are heated, but they expand; that is, the heat drives their particles asunder, so that the minute spaces between them are widened and the body takes up more room. Knowing this, a smith, before he puts hoops on casks or tires round wheels, makes them red-hot. The heat expands them, and as they cool they shrink and bind tightly round the cask or wheel. And you

know that two pieces of dry wood can be set on fire by being rubbed together, and that two pieces of ice can be melted in the same way, proving that heat is a 'mode of motion.'

The enormous *heat* of each body in the solar system was produced by the particles striking against one another as they were driven together by the force of *attraction.*

Another proof that the earth was once so hot as to be in a soft or melted state is afforded by its shape. It is not perfectly round, but slightly flattened at each pole, which was caused by its having been a fluid mass, spinning round like a top. In illustration of this, a lump of very soft clay or a mass of oil floating in liquid of the same density (or like weight bulk for bulk), will, when turned round, become flattened like the earth.

Again, the rocks forming part of the solid outside covering of the earth known as the *crust,* which have been fused together by fire, prove that the most intense heat must once have prevailed.

Every hot body which ceases to receive heat becomes cold; that is, parts with its heat; the

larger the body, the longer it takes to cool, the outside cooling before the centre. The sun is so vast a body that he is still white hot, giving out heat, light and other forms of energy. The moons being the smallest bodies were the first to cool; then the smaller planets, until we come to huge Jupiter and Saturn, which for aught we know may still be shedding some light and heat upon their moons. As each planet was once a small sun, there was a time, not to be counted by years, when the earth gave forth light and heat, and perchance supported life upon the now airless, sea-less moon.

And although the earth's crust had become cool and hard enormous ages back, there is still a vast store of heat below, which shows its power in the volcano belching forth its streams of lava; in the earthquake shaking down large cities and burying people in their ruins; and in the hot springs from which, chiefly in Iceland, jets of boiling water are thrown to a great height. The deepest mines, which, compared to the thickness of the earth, are but as scratchings on a school globe, are so hot that were it not for currents of fresh air the

miners could not work in them. This store of heat is slowly but surely slipping away into space, so that finally the earth will become cold to its very core.

In brief, what the sun is the earth was millions of years ago; and what the moon now is the earth will be millions of years hence, when flowers may bloom and life perchance in lovelier forms flourish elsewhere.

When the earth was a molten ball there were zones of vapour round it, which slowly condensed and fell as water into the valleys and cracks and lower levels of the cooling crust, filling them and thereby forming river, sea and ocean.

Of the mode in which, as the cooling went on, there fell from these zones different materials which helped to prepare the earth for the support of the life that was to appear thereon, or of the views held about the thickness of the crust and the nature of the matter beneath it, I cannot here speak. These are among the guesses of the wise, which may or may not be true, and there is already more of well-proved statement than this chapter can contain.

The crust of the earth is made up of rocks of many kinds and ages, all of which have been either laid down by water or melted and mixed together by fire. Of the former, some are composed of particles of various stones, and others largely or wholly of the remains of once-living animals and plants : the fire-fused rocks containing no traces of such remains. It is this crust which tells so surely the story of those vast changes of which the earth has been the scene, and which are still going on ; how the heat within is rending the surface in one place and upheaving or sinking it in other places ; how every little stream and brooklet is doing its work in altering the face of things, carrying soil to the sea, which is with hungry maw eating away the rock-bound coasts and softer fringes of the land ; how, as the result of this, new continents and islands are slowly uprising from shallow seas, to be one day dowered with the richest gifts of nature, studded with homesteads and cities, and the birthplace of wonders undreamt of which the spirit of man shall reveal ; when the seas will in their turn cover the happy homes of now the sunniest lands. All this is beyond question, for

there is no rest in nature, not even in the things which look dullest and deadest; the particles that make up a stone being most likely ever moving, as we know the particles of a magnet are.

Professor Huxley, in describing the surprising movements of little bodies which course through the fluid in the hairs of the common stinging-nettle, just as like little bodies float in our blood, repairing the ceaseless waste of our frames, says that if our ears could catch the murmur of the currents whirling in the numberless cells which make up every tree, 'we should be stunned as with the roar of a great city.'

By way of illustration that the earth's face is ever changing, a study of its crust and a survey of its sea-depths tell us that our own island has been more than once buried under the waters, and more than once united to Europe. Even since man first appeared, great changes have been wrought upon the surface of the globe. For example, Asia Minor was once joined to Europe where the Bosphorus now flows, thus damming up the waters of the Black Sea, which was united to the Caspian and Aral Seas and to Lake Balkash,

forming one vast inland sea, the waters of which overflowed northwards through the basin of the Obi into the Arctic Ocean. With the wearing away of the barrier between Europe and Asia Minor, the waters of the Black Sea rushed through what is now the Dardanelles to the Mediterranean; and with the warmer climate and drier air brought about by the slow upheaval of Siberia, the Caspian, Aral, and Balkash waters shrunk under quicker evaporation to their present size, laying bare the wide salt-laden, sandy wastes that now lie between them.

Now the cutting off of Eastern Europe and of Western Central Asia by that great midland sea not only deeply affected the climate and general surroundings, but also influenced the movements and progress of races, helping to bring about the differences which exist between them. With the partial drying-up of that sea there were opened up routes by which the peoples of both east and west could freely intermingle, and get more elbow-room in which to develop.

It was formerly held that changes such as these had extended to the whole surface of the globe,

that the great Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were once dry land, the scattered islands in them being the loftiest peaks of sunken continents. But it is now known that all islands very far from the mainland are not such fragments, but due to volcanic upheaval, and that the deep ocean-basins have always been filled with water, the changes on the earth's surface being limited to parts where the sea is shallow.

No one knows how long a time passed between the molten state of the earth and the appearance upon its surface of the first forms of plant and animal life. That untold millions of years rolled away before the crust was cool enough to allow the steamy vapours above it to fall as water, is certain, and even then ages may have passed before other than the minutest kinds of life began to be. All that men of science can do is to get a rough idea of the time which it has taken to form a given thickness of certain layers of rock, each of which is called a *stratum* (from a Latin word meaning *spread out*).

For example: a very large portion of the

earth's crust consists of chalk, which is made up of the shells of exceedingly small creatures that live and die under water, creatures of a kind that are at this moment forming chalk beds at the bottom of the sea. A layer of chalk one foot thick is not heaped up in less than one hundred years, and it probably takes a much longer time, so that, as the chalk beds in some parts of England exceed one thousand feet in thickness, we are on the safe side in reckoning that their formation occupied not less than one hundred thousand years. And as any table of the earth's crust will show you, there are rocks above and below the chalk, for the production of which millions heaped upon millions of years are required.

Such vast lengths of time may startle us to whom but a few years of life here are given, but they count not with the Power which is from everlasting to everlasting, and which, working through the ages, has caused this earth to yield us that rich variety which 'age cannot wither.' And that variety too out of few materials; for the bodies we dwell in; the air we breathe; the

water we drink; and every animal, tree and flower, are for the larger part formed of three gases, known to us as oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen, each of which by itself is invisible, tasteless and without smell! Oxygen forms three-fourths of the uppermost crust of the earth.

In reading these names and the names given to other things, always seek the reason why they have been chosen, but at the same time remember that we know nothing as to what things are *in themselves*, and this will save you from many a boastful blunder of thinking that you know all about a substance because you have learnt its name. But in speaking of the few materials out of which such variety has come, there is something more wonderful to be said, and with it this chapter must close.

It is, I hope, made clear to you, that the sun and all the bodies in his system are composed of the same materials, and by means of an instrument called a *spectroscope*, which enables astronomers to examine the light from the stars, no matter how many years it has been travelling to the earth, they are able to tell what metals are

burning in those far-off bodies, and they find that those materials which are most plentiful in the stars are those which enter so largely into the structure of living creatures on the earth.

It is therefore no blind guess, but well-proved truth, that matter throughout the whole universe is the same in kind, but in different states. In the sun and his fellow-suns, the stars, it is white-hot; on the earth and some other planets (Mars, for example, on which a good telescope clearly shows the division of land and water and the increase of snow at the poles as the winter nears) it is cool enough to sustain life; in the moon and meteors it is cold and barren; while in some of the cloud-like clusters in the sky called *nebulæ* (from Latin *nebula*, a cloud), it is in a gas-like state.

Having said thus much, it would be needful to say a good deal more, but this book is only a finger-post to point what seems the right road in which sound knowledge about this world's history can be gained. You need not think that the lesson will be quickly learned, or that our knowledge will ever be complete. Science can never

tell us all that we should like to know, or lead us beyond the veil 'where men grow blind though angels know the rest.' But we shall agree that her 'marvellous tale' has as much poetry in it as the old legends quoted, and certainly more of fact. The cloud-like mass becomes a cooled globe, a fair and fertile world given man for dwelling-place, truly an Eden (*land of delight*, as that word means) where the soft air was wafted laden with the fragrance of sweet flowers, where the birds warbled love-music, and the stream murmured its thanks for the jewels which the sunlight scattered on its bosom.

CHAPTER IV.

LEGENDS OF THE PAST ABOUT MANKIND.

To the legends already given may be added a few concerning the early state of mankind.

For thousands of years before the rudest kind of picture-writing was invented, the mind of man was busily speculating how that which he saw had come to pass, and not less, but rather more, would he wonder whence and how he himself had come; and out of that wonderment have grown the legends which have been handed down by old-world fathers to their children. These legends of a beginning, of the first man, and of a bright unflecked day whose glory had gone, legends in which a little fact was mixed up with much guessing, came to be looked upon as true every word, and were at last set down not as largely born of the fancy of man, but as history to be believed. And we find them lingering still among tribes and nations, because none readily

give up the old for the new and cut themselves adrift from that which their fathers held dear.

Nearly all speak of happy times spent without labour or care, and then of evil stealing in and beguiling men with a lie. Seeking to explain the mystery of sorrow and pain, of the guilt and hard toil to which none are strangers, they have dreamed of a past when these ills were not. The Pârsî looks back to the happy rule of King Yima, when men and cattle were immortal, when water and trees never dried up and food was plentiful, when there was no cold nor heat, no envy nor old age. The Buddhist looks back to the age of glorious soaring beings who had no sin, no sex, no want of food till the unhappy hour when, tasting a delicious scum that formed upon the surface of the earth, they fell into evil and in time became degraded. It was King Chetiya who told the first lie, and the people who heard of it, not knowing what a lie was, asked if it were white or black or blue. Men's lives grew shorter and shorter, and it was King Maha Sâgara who, after a brief reign of two hundred and fifty-two

thousand years, made the dismal discovery of the first grey hair.'

The Tibetans and Mongolians believe that the first human beings were as gods, but desiring a certain sweet herb, they ate of it, and lower feelings were thus aroused within them; their wings dropped off; their beauty faded; and the years of their life were made few and filled with bitterness. Passing by any full account of the Hindu story of a tree of life on a mountain ever bathed in sunshine, where no sin could enter and where dreadful dragons kept the way to the heavenly plants and fruits, and also of the Greek belief that far away there were the Islands of the Blessed with a garden full of golden apples guarded by an unsleeping serpent, we have the Greek myth which tells us that the first men were happy and without work, but with a desire to assert their power, and withal defy or mock the gods. Then Promêtheus shaped a human form out of clay, and stole forbidden fire from heaven wherewith to give it life. This made Zeus angry, and he laid a plan by which the evils that mankind dreaded, and which were

sealed within a box guarded by Epimêtheus, the brother of Promêtheus, should be let loose. He ordered the lord of fire to fashion the first woman, who by her charms should bring misery to man. Then the gods enriched her with beauty, cunning and fair speech, naming her Pandôra or All-gifted, and Zeus took her to Epimêtheus who, contrary to the advice of his brother to accept nothing from the gods, made her his wife, so smitten was he with her beautiful face and so beguiled by her smooth words. She had not been long with him before she opened the box, whence came forth strife and sickness and all other ills that afflict mankind, and then hastily closing it, she shut up hope within, so that no comfort was given to men.

In Persian tradition Ormuzd is said to have promised the first man and woman never-ending bliss if they would remain good. But a demon in the form of a serpent was sent by Ahriman, and they believed the lie he told them that the good gifts came from Ahriman, whom they thereupon worshipped. The demon then brought them fruits, which they ate, and thereby lost their happy state. Driven away, they killed

beasts for food and wore their skins, and in the hearts of these unhappy creatures there raged hatred and envy, which cursed them and their children.

The likeness of this legend to that in Genesis which tells how woe befel Adam and Eve when, tempted by a talking serpent, they ate forbidden fruit, is very striking. Both may have preserved the memory of a time when men were driven by great changes of climate, summer's heat giving place to long winter's cold, into untrodden wilds; driven, as they thought, by the anger of an offended God.

The mention of a serpent in both these legends reminds us what a great part that creature has played in many religions as an object of worship; also as an emblem of both good and evil, as among the Persians and other Eastern nations; of wisdom, as among African and other tribes who believe that the souls of some ancestors pass into snakes; of eternity, when coiling itself in the form of a circle, as among the Egyptians and Phœnicians; and of dominion, under the shape of a dragon, as among the Chinese. Crawling on its belly (its

name comes from the Latin, *serpo*, to creep) with stealthy, dart-like movement; with glittering eye that held the shuddering looker-on as if spell-bound; and with horrid hiss; no wonder that the strange reptile, so unlike beast or bird, came at last to be regarded in many lands as the symbol of evil, and that over its destruction feasts were held and sacrifices offered. That the legend of dire work wrought by it has found a place in Jewish writings is not matter for surprise, nor that people should make the common blunder of believing that it was the devil who under such a form beguiled Adam and Eve into disobedience.

Much could be said about the false beliefs to which this legend has given rise, but it must suffice to show what crude ideas about God are imbedded in the Bible account of the fashioning of man.

In the first account of creation in the book of Genesis we read that 'God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.'

In all old legends, as in the belief of ignorant folk, and also of folk who ought to know better,

but who are too lazy or careless to think about the matter, we find God spoken of as if He had shape, sometimes that of a man, sometimes that of lower creatures, according to the ideas of people and to the age or land in which they live. In other parts of the Bible God is represented as like ourselves, only bigger and stronger; as walking and talking, as pleased or angry, doing, in short, the things that we do. But with increase of knowledge, and, with this, the rise of worthier and loftier ideas, we find God spoken of, as by Isaiah, Jesus, Paul, and others, as a spirit to whom man bears likeness in the spirit or soul which is believed to dwell in him; in short, to be him. The word *man*, which comes from a root meaning *to think*, shews how long ago this was seen to mark off man from the lower animals, although the higher amongst these have mental faculties, but so much below his as to make a gulf between them which cannot be passed. They have reached a certain point; some of them can do things which man cannot rival in skill or fitness, but they can make no advance, neither sinking lower nor rising higher. In olden times, when

the most confused ideas of the power for good or harm possessed by brutes and even lifeless things prevailed, punishment was inflicted on them for evils which befel men through them.* Now we know that in man alone dwells the sense of what we call sin, which is wrong-doing in some way or another against his fellowman, and when men commit crimes they are punished because they *ought,* that is, they *owe* it to others, not so to do, and we treat them as beings who have the power to do right as well as the power to do wrong; the power to choose between a better and a worse, and thus rise nobly or fall shamefully.

In the second account of creation in Genesis, we read that 'the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.'

Now the matter of which the universe has been formed has neither been added to nor lessened, and therefore it follows that at the birth of any living thing there is no bringing in of new matter, but the using over again of the old.

Of the matter of which the earth is composed,

* See Note C.

the flower, the insect, the bird, the fish and the brute are alike made, and they live and grow and repair their waste by taking into themselves air and light and food. And the body of man is not something different from these, but one with them 'of the dust of the ground,' and in itself not more wonderfully formed for its purpose than they for their purpose. We know that it has in the long course of ages come through lower forms to be what it is, and are able to trace the manifold changes—even to tell in some degree how they have been wrought—which have brought about results as wonderful as those which are seen in the highest races of past and present times. For in this we must take man at his best and noblest, because Plato, Newton and Shakspere are much further removed from the savages of Australia than these savages are removed from the man-like apes.

It is interesting to note that Science confirms in the main what is said in Genesis i. about the order in which life appeared upon the earth, since the deepest layers of rocks, which of course are the oldest, yield fossils of the lowest forms of life, forms

so faint that whether they be the remains of plant or of animal, or of both, is uncertain ; and the nearer we come to the surface the higher is the kind of life found to have been, until the highest of all, man himself, is reached, his presence being first shown in rudely chipped stone tools and weapons, and next by his remains. It may be added that the ancient Egyptians believed the first man to have been formed from the slime of the river Nile ; the Chinese that he was shaped from yellow clay ; the Peruvians that he was created by Divine power as 'animated earth ;' one of the North American tribes that the Great Spirit formed two figures from clay, who were named 'first man' and 'companion;' another tribe says that men once lived underground, but that finding a hole through which to creep to the surface, they were tempted by the plentiful food to remain above ground. This resembles a legend among the Bushmen, who shewed Dr Moffat the footprints of the first men, and laughed at his Bible story of man's creation out of moist dust ! One thing stands out clearly when we compare these legends, namely, that they are all the outcome of barbaric ideas.

CHAPTER V.

EARLY RACES OF MANKIND.

It is a profitless question to ask when and where man's immediate ancestors first appeared. For it was only by very slow processes that these ancestors themselves—hairy, ape-like creatures, deft of hand, cunning of brain, and with power to stand on two feet—were developed from yet more ape-like animals which were the common ancestors of man and apes. The homes and haunts of these were probably in some warm, well-wooded zone like that, although further northward, now inhabited by the gorilla and other big man-like apes.

So far as the earth has been explored, the traces of man's presence are more in his handiwork than in his bones.

The vast number of stone implements which have been found in Europe and many other parts

of the globe were without doubt shaped by the hand of man many thousands of years ago; but although they give some clue to the rude, wild state of those who made them, they throw no light whatever on the question of man's first home. His greatness among all living creatures, from the earliest time of which we have glimpses, is seen in this: that although he was made naked and with a bodily frame much weaker than many of the brutes, he was able, armed only with clumsy stone weapons, to slay animals of a huge size. And this because as *brutes* they knew nothing of their own power, wherewith they could have crushed him with ease; while as *man* he had the knowledge whereby so to use his weapons as to subdue and kill them.

Let us see whether the records of changes in Europe throw any light upon the time of man's appearance there.

If we find imbedded in layers of rock the remains of animals and plants which could live only in hot regions, we may fairly conclude what the climate must have been when they flourished.

Now from the nature of the fossils found in what are called the Tertiary rocks (from Lat. *tertius*, third), which compose the *third* great division of the water-laid rocks, it is certain that the climate of Europe was once very warm. Thick jungles and tangled forest-growths of plants akin to those in hot countries abounded, amongst which creatures of huge size and vast numbers roamed at will, crunching the young shoots and branches between their enormous teeth; while the river-creeks and swamps were the abode of wallowing crocodiles, sharks and turtles of monster size.

The Tertiary epoch was followed by a season of the bitterest cold, known as the Ice Age, which covered the northern parts of the earth with thick plates of ice. While this was going on, the Continent of Europe, which had stretched beyond Ireland, gradually sank beneath the sea, so that a large part of it was changed into frozen straits and many ice-clad islands. In the long course of time the climate again became milder, and the land 'arose from out the azure main,' so that Ireland was re-united to Britain, and Britain to the mainland, which was joined to Africa at

different parts, the Mediterranean Sea being thereby divided into two large land-locked basins. Periods of cold and heat followed one another; at one time the woolly-haired rhinoceros, mammoth or maned elephant, cave-bear and other wild beasts lived here, and when warmer times drove them to more northern parts, hippopotamuses, lions, hyenas and such like tenants of hot countries came.

Now as man differs from all the man-like apes more than they differ from one another, it is clear that he became marked off from the common form from which he and they are alike descended some long time before they diverged from one another. And as the remains of large apes found in Miocene or Middle Tertiary deposits in Europe prove that this divergence took place before then, we should expect to find remains of man still farther back. A few have been found, evidencing his antiquity in both the Old World and the New, but it is in the deposits following the Ice Age, namely, in old river-gravels and limestone caverns, that we find his tools and weapons in great abundance. The limestone caverns have been scooped out of the

rock by the slow action of water. The limy matter in or beneath which the implements are found imbedded and which is called stalagmite (from Greek *stalagma*, a drop) is formed as follows. Rain water passes through the limestone roof, and by means of the carbonic acid which it has derived from the air and from decayed leaves and the like, eats away particles of the roof, through which it trickles, and drops them beneath as carbonate of lime or *stalagmite*. Sometimes the dissolved particles cling to the roof, and, hanging from it, form in course of time very beautiful columns called *stalactites*, but with these we have nothing to do.

Now as the rate at which the stalagmite is laid down gives some clue to the age of the relics found beneath it when there is proof that it has not been disturbed, it will be well to enter one of the most famous caverns situate near Torquay, known as 'Kent's Hole,' and see for ourselves what may be the age of the several deposits.

First, there are blocks of limestone, which have fallen from the roof from time to time.

Then black muddy mould, beneath which lies a

bed of stalagmite varying from three inches to five feet in thickness. Underneath this are two layers, one only a few inches thick and composed mainly of charred wood; the other some feet in thickness and composed of earth which has been slowly washed in through the cavern's mouth. Then we come to a second bed of stalagmite of a different character to the upper bed, and much thicker than it, reaching in some parts to a depth of twelve feet. Below all these lies a dark red sandy deposit called *breccia* (Italian, meaning a *fragment*), the depth of which is unknown.

In the uppermost layer there were found relics of a time before the Romans invaded Britain, which we may safely put down as 2000 years old. In the upper stalagmite there were found bones of the rhinoceros, elephant, hyena, &c., and of man, with flakes struck off flints by human hands, and also the cores from which they had been struck. Now without going farther down at present, how can we get at the age of this stalagmite? There have been cut into it certain letters and dates, one of which—'Robert Hedges, of Ireland, Feb. 20, 1688'—we may believe is

genuine, because it was discovered over 60 years ago, on a huge boss of stalagmite rising up from the floor; and although there are others of earlier date, we will take it as our point of reckoning. It is described by the man who saw it in 1825 as covered over with a thin film of stalagmite, a description which applies to it now, although the water has been dripping on it ever since.

Now the carbonate of lime which has gathered upon that cutting since 1688 does not exceed the *twentieth of an inch* in thickness, and we have to account for a deposit which is in some places *five feet* thick. By an easy sum in multiplication we find that, at this rate, it takes 3720 years for the water trickling through the roof of Kent's Hole to deposit *one inch* of stalagmite, and therefore 44,640 years to deposit *one foot*. But in these reckonings we must always allow largely for causes that quicken or arrest the deposit.

We have not, however, done yet. There is the layer of charred wood, called the 'black band,' which yielded hundreds of flint tools, a bone needle, burnt bones, remains of hyenas, bears, oxen, &c. There is the cave earth, with relics of

a like kind, and then we come to the lower bed of stalagmite, which contained bones of the cave-bear only, and which is in some places more than double the thickness of the upper bed.

Lastly, we reach the solid mass called breccia, in which, mingled with immense numbers of teeth and bones of the cave-bear, were found flint implements which without doubt were shaped by the hand and skill of man.

As hinted above, the thickness of layers of stalagmite is not always a test of the great age of remains found in them or below them, as in some caverns the layers are formed at a very much quicker rate than in others, and if the proof of man's early presence on the earth rested on this alone, it would be needful to speak with caution. But further proof is at hand in the worked flints found in the river-gravels of England and France, and in the kind of animals with whose remains his own are found, that man lived in northern Europe thousands upon thousands of years ago in the period known as the Old Stone Age.

After a time which years fail to reckon, when

the waters, ever working 'without haste and without rest,' had cut a channel between England and France, there appeared in Europe race after race of people who were far higher than the Old Stone Age men. The lowest among these men of the New Stone Age, as it is called, of whom traces are found in refuse heaps along the shores of the Baltic Sea, had tamed the dog, while those who lived in houses built upon piles driven into the bottom of lakes in Switzerland and elsewhere, had learnt to till the soil and to make pottery.

Mankind at first were few in number, but as the mouths to be fed multiplied faster than the food wherewith to fill them, it was needful either that the ground should be tilled or that some should leave in search of food elsewhere, and since man must advance somewhat before he becomes a husbandman, the latter course would be chosen.

So, hunger-driven or forced away by change of climate, and also, it may be, led on by desire to see what the world was like and to find excitement in chasing animals to kill and eat, some would leave, and thus give up a settled kind of life, which tends to peaceful progress, for a roving

life. The pressing wants of the body urged them to wander far and wide, and soon long distances would divide the hunters. This would lead to the peopling of the world in many parts, and in the course of long ages to the fixing of wandering tribes wherever food was to be had, and the land seemed fair and fertile.

From this we may understand how the earliest dwellers are found scattered over Europe. They were rude savages, living by hunting and fishing. Man is first of all a hunter, then he finds out that some of the animals which he kills for food can be made useful to him in other ways, so he tames them. This leads him to follow the more settled life of a shepherd, and when he becomes a tiller of the soil, or farmer, he stays in one place. There the family grows into a tribe and the tribe into a nation.

Having striven to make clear the mode in which mankind slowly overspread various parts of the world, I have now to give you, in as simple a form as the subject will permit, an account of some ancient peoples who have played a markedly eventful part in the history of civilization.

I shall take you back to the time when man had outgrown his first rude savage state; but, so many are the years, we shall still be a long way beyond the line where the history of nations stands out clearly before us. The story is worth your careful attention, for to know who these peoples were and what they did, is to learn the thoughts of men whose words we speak and to find out how we have become what we are.

The old writers, in speaking of 'the world,' took for granted that it did not extend beyond the countries of which they knew. Now although its real size and shape are well known to us, we are too apt to think only of that part of it where the highest races have lived, and to leave out the other parts with their millions of people still in a savage or half-civilized state. This must be borne in mind in reading what follows, since the limits of this book forbid my stating what is known of the manner of life and religions of the numerous races scattered over the northern regions of Asia, over large tracts of Africa and America, and throughout the many islands of the southern seas

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRIMITIVE ARYANS.

A. Their Home and Civilization.

TOWARDS the end of the last century, Sir William Jones, when in India, discovered that the Sanskrit language, in which the sacred hymns which compose the Bible of the Brahmans, called the Vedas, are written, had so many things in common with English and other European languages that he was led to the conclusion that they all belonged to the same family of speech. And when, some years afterwards, other scholars followed up his work, and made closer comparisons of groups of words in these languages, they agreed that Sir William Jones had made a discovery as wonderful, one of them said, as that 'of a new world.' So in truth it was, for what could be more striking than the fact that languages which

seemed so unlike one another, both in their sounds and signs, should have sprung from the same source ; grown from the same roots ? How came it about, men went on to ask, that the Hindu and the Icelander, the Russian and the Spaniard, the Englishman and the Persian, the Norwegian and the Italian, the Frenchman and the German, should be speaking languages which, although the speakers could not understand one another, were found to be, as we may say, first cousins ? so that the written thoughts of these peoples, their songs, their sagas, their legends, their sacred books—the Bibles of the Christian, Brahman and Buddhist religions—were all akin ? This could only be, it was answered, because the leading nations of Europe and the Hindus and some other peoples of Asia were themselves akin ; offspring, through a long descent, of one mother-tribe, whose tongue their forefathers spake, and carried with them when they migrated from their common home on the Bactrian plains of Central Asia, the larger number wandering westward into Europe, and the smaller number remaining nearer to the primitive home.

This answer, however, overlooked the fact that people who speak the same, or a nearly allied, language, are not always of the same race. There are many cases in which nations have adopted the tongue of their foreign conquerors. For example, the Romans imposed their language upon the subjected races of France and Spain, and, among ourselves, we find the Cornish and Essex folk, the one being of Celtic blood, and the other of Teutonic blood, speaking the English tongue. Then, too, there are the Jews, who, although not mixing by marriage with other races, adopt the language of the particular country in which they settle. So that although words explain a great deal, they cannot explain everything, and it was through resting on their witness alone, agreeing, as this did, with the old legends about the East as man's birthplace and the cradle of civilization which are given in the Bible and other sacred books, that the theory of first, India, then of Central Asia, as the primitive home of the Aryan or Indo-European peoples, as they are called, was accepted with little question.

One seemingly sound reason in support of this

was that Sanskrit was thought to be the eldest member of the Indo-European family of speech, and that the original home must be where the oldest forms of the language are found. But our knowledge of Sanskrit comes from written materials alone, as it appears not to have been a spoken tongue after the third century before Christ. And there are Indo-European languages—as, for example, the Lithuanian, on the Baltic, which is spoken now, and which has undergone little change during thousands of years—in which there is a number of very old Indo-European words. This fact, together with other facts drawn from more material remains than language, as skulls and relics in graves and dwellings, has upset the old belief in Central Asia as the primitive Aryan home, and now nearly every learned man believes that that home was in some part of Central Europe between the Baltic and the Caspian Seas. Like everything else, language has not leapt into existence ready-made and perfect, and we know not, perhaps may never know, amongst what particular race the primitive speech out of which the rich family of the Indo-European tongues

has grown, arose, nor what varying causes brought about all its changes and added to its wealth. But all evidence points to its having arisen among a people who had dwelt in Europe far back in the New Stone Age, and, as the following table shews, the main body of Aryan-speaking peoples is found in Europe, the lesser body being in Asia. And it is in accord with reason and common sense that where we can trace the unbroken presence of the larger portion through many thousands of years, there the primitive home of the whole is more likely to have been. For it is smaller bodies which break away from larger bodies, and not larger from smaller.

Table of Aryan or Indo-European Languages.

In Europe:—

Celtic, . Once the language of a large part of Europe, but now spoken only in Wales, the Isle of Man, and some parts of Ireland and Scotland.

Teutonic, Under which name the languages that have given birth to the English,

German, Icelandic, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, &c., are grouped.

Slavonic, The language spoken in many dialects all over Russia in Europe and part of Austria.

Greek, . The parent of modern Greek.

Latin, . The language of Ancient Rome (which was in the little province of *Latium*) and the parent of the Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Wallachian languages.

In India:—

Sanskrit, The language in which the Vedas or sacred books of the Brahmans are written, and the parent of the modern dialects of Hindustan.

Zend, . . (so-called.) The language of the ancient Persians and of their sacred book, the Zend-Avesta.

The languages now spoken in Persia, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Armenia and Ceylon, and the dialects of the *Gypsies* are Aryan, those strange wanderers having probably come from India.

To this list may be added the following examples of likeness between a few common words in the chief languages. The differences which will be seen between them are due to the changes to which the sounds of a language are liable, one sound being often used in the place of another, as is the case, for example, with children in trying to utter certain words. These changes, which were found to have taken place upon a large scale in all the Indo-European languages, are grouped together under the title of 'Grimm's Law,' from the name of their discoverer.

	Sanskrit.	*Zend.*	*Greek.*	*Latin.*	*Gothic.*	*Slavonic.*	*Irish.*
Father .	pitár	patar	patêr	pater	fadar	...	athair
Mother .	mâtár	mâtar	mêtêr	mater	...	mati	mathair
Brother .	bhrâtar	brâtar	phratêr	frater	bróthar	brat'	brathair
Sister . .	svásar	qanhar	...	soror	svistar	sestra	siur
Daughter	duhitar	dughdhar	thugatêr	...	dauhtar	...	dear (?)
Me . . .	me	me	me	me	mik	man	me
House . .	dama	demana	domos	domus	...	domii	daimh
Boat . . .	naus	naw	naus	navis	...	...	noi or na
Ox & Cow	go (nom. gaus)	gâo	bous	bos	...	govjado	bó
					Anglo-Saxon		
Horse . .	âsu, asva	aspa	hippos	equus	eoh	...	ech
					Old High German.		
Sow . . .	sû	...	hus	sus	sû	svinia	suig
						Polish.	
Mouse . .	mûsh	...	mus	mus	mûs	mysz	...
					Mœso-Gothic.		
						Slavonic.	
Two . . .	dwa	dwa	dûo	duo	twa	dwa	dau
Three . .	tri	thri	treis	tres	thri	tri	tri
Five . . .	panka	...	pente	quinque	fimf	...	...

This much by way of explanation has been needful, because in all the former editions of this book the old theory about the primitive home of the Aryans was set forth. It is true that it matters little to us whether these remote folk had their rise in Europe or in Asia. But what does matter is that we keep an open mind to receive and welcome any new facts that are brought to light, and to accept the conclusions to which they lead us, no matter how these conclusions may upset old beliefs and grate against our feelings. For better and wiser than the wish to believe is the desire to know.

And now by the help of materials gathered within the last few years—the larger part of them since this book was first written—we may put together a sketch of the mode of life among the primitive Aryans while they were as yet an undivided people, a sketch which, if it be not so full in detail or so highly drawn as the older pictures of their civilization, has the greater merit of being more in accord with our latest knowledge.

They had advanced from the rude hunting stage of the earlier folk who appear in the dawn of the

New Stone Age, when, as the immense refuse heaps on the Baltic coast show, the dog—earliest friend and servant of man—had been tamed. They had domesticated sheep and cattle. Many of the words common to all the Aryan languages refer to the cow, even the word for 'warrior' used in the Veda means 'a struggle for cows,' and it is well known that for many ages wealth was reckoned in cattle. This fact survives in our word 'pecuniary,' from the Latin *pecunia*, 'money,' which comes from *pecus*, 'cattle.' In like manner our word 'fee' is the Anglo-Saxon *feoh*, which means both 'cattle' and 'property,' and is the same as the German *vieh*, 'a cow.' Thus do words prove to be, as Archbishop Trench calls them, 'fossil history.'

The domestication of pigs, poultry and horses was later. The wicker waggons, mounted on roller wheels made of a single trunk, in which, like the ancient Scythians, and the Tatars of to-day, the Aryans travelled in search of pasture land, were drawn by oxen which long remained in use as beasts of burden, as they still do in some countries. The tribes were ignorant of metals, except, perhaps,

of copper, the red colour and frequent outcrop of which would attract the eye, while its softness, as compared with most other metals, made it easy to work. So they had, in the main, to make shift with stone tools and weapons, and the tasks which they wrought with them are really surprising to us who are used to sharp-edged steel implements. They were makers of pottery and had learned the art of plaiting. They wove coarse fabrics of flax, but their chief clothing was the skins of cattle and wild animals, which they cleaned with stone 'scrapers' and sewed together with bone needles, using sinews as thread. The dress of men and women appears to have been alike. In summer time they lived for the most part in huts made of boughs or woven twigs, and in winter time they took shelter in pits roofed-in with interlaced branches covered with turf or dung. Remains of these dwellings are found in the south of England and elsewhere. A pastoral folk seldom quit their free, roving life while food for themselves and flocks can be had without the labour of cultivating it, and therefore it was only as the range of pasture land narrowed that the Aryans became tillers of the

soil, and this not all at the same time. The absence of any word for 'autumn,' the season of ingathering of the crops, is one among other proofs of this. Barley was probably the first grain to be sown, and meanwhile the Aryans stored up nuts, acorns, seeds and wild fruits, at which we know mice got, because mouse, which is common to many of the Aryan languages (see list on page 71), means 'the thief.' But, as with hunters and herdsmen everywhere, their staple food was flesh, which they roasted, for the knowledge of fire was among the earliest of the arts of life. They drank milk, and made merry with a stronger liquor called 'mead,' which was prepared from wild honey, and, as will be seen later on, came to be regarded as the drink of the gods. They used 'dug-outs,' or canoes hollowed out of a single trunk with stone axes with the aid of fire. These were propelled by oars or poles, but had no sails, which would not come into use until the tribes ventured on the large inland or open seas. There is no common Indo-European word for 'sea;' that in the European languages, Greek excepted, is the same, but each of the Asiatic Aryans had a different name for it.

So the European Aryans must have coined theirs in some common sea-coast settlement, perhaps by the Baltic or Caspian. They had bows and bone-tipped arrows, sling-stones hurled at first by hand, stone axes and clubs, lances of hard wood burned to a point, and other primitive missiles which man, before the age of metals, found ready to hand, and which could be used with or without being shaped as weapons against his fellows and fierce animals. The names of some of these weapons, as Anglo-Saxon *seax*, 'a sword,' related to Latin *saxum*, 'a stone,' and Anglo-Saxon *hamor*, 'a rock,' denote the material of which they were made. Even as late as the thirteenth century, the famous Sir William Wallace fought against the English with a stone axe.

The primitive Aryans could count up to one hundred, using their fingers, as shewn by the word 'five' (see list on page 71), which means 'hand' or 'fist.' But they could not reckon up to a thousand, as shewn by the fact that the word for that figure is not the same in the European and the Asiatic groups. They measured the year by seasons, probably, at first, by summer and winter

only, as among pastoral people the one was the time when the cattle grazed in the pastures, and the other was the time when they were kept in the stable. As to measures of length, some of them were taken from parts of the body; for example, English *ell*, Anglo-Saxon *eln*, Latin *ulna*, Greek *olēnē*, all mean the 'fore-arm'; English *fathom*, Anglo-Saxon *fæthem*, Icelandic *fathmr*, all mean 'bosom'; our word 'foot' is the Anglo-Saxon *fôt*, Lithuanian *padas*, Greek *pous*, Latin *pes*, Sanskrit *pâda*, and we speak of a horse as so many 'hands' high.

The names for mother, brother, and father-in-law are common to all the Aryan languages, and those for father, husband, son, daughter and sister to nearly all, showing that there was well-ordered family life, and that relationship by marriage as well as by blood was recognised. But as wives, of which a man might have more than one, were obtained by capture, and later on by purchase, woman was not treated as man's equal and companion. She was his property, with which he might deal as with aught else that was his, and the fear and dread of him as master

of her fate which set her watchful to study his whims and moods has clung to her more or less ever since. Remains found in graves in Derbyshire and elsewhere show that widows were burnt alive on funeral pyres with their dead husbands, and so great is the power of custom that this still happens in India now and then, although the *suttee*, as it is called (meaning 'good wife'), is forbidden by the British Government. It had its rise, in large degree, in the supposed needs of the dead that he might not go into another world unattended. For the like reason many things used by him when alive were buried with him, and food was placed by his grave that his spirit might not wander about helpless and hungry. Customs of this kind linger in unlooked-for ways long after their once serious meaning is forgotten. Ages after wives and slaves were burnt or buried with their owner, the warrior's horse was killed and buried with him, and the ceremony of leading the horse in the soldier's funeral procession is a remnant of that custom.

The power of life and death which a man had over his wife was exercised over his children. At

the birth of a child the father decreed whether it should live or die; if he decreed death, the infant was 'exposed,' and left to perish of hunger or to be eaten by wild beasts. This power remained with the father among the ancient Teutons and Romans, although the law forbade the latter to 'expose' infants unless they were weakly or deformed.

As with the young, so it was with the old when they became infirm and useless; all of which merciless customs are in keeping with the disregard of, and small value set on, life among these barbaric races with their burning of captives in funeral rites, and their bloody offerings of men to the gods. When the Wikings or Vikings launched a ship, they bound men to the rollers, that the keel might be sprinkled with their blood,—perhaps the christening of a ship is a relic of this custom,—and there are terrible traditions of the once wide-spread practice of walling-up a human being, or of crushing him under the foundation stone of a new building to secure the favour of the god, perhaps the earth-spirit, upon the undertaking.* Legends often preserve traces of custom, and the Servians

* See Note D.

have one which tells how three brothers combined to build a fortress, but year by year the demon pulled down by night what was built during the day. He would be appeased only by the sacrifice of the first of the three wives of the brothers who should bring the workman their food. The three men swore to keep this secret from their wives, but the two eldest brothers broke their oath, so the youngest brother's wife went to the building unsuspecting her fate, and was walled-in. She entreated that an opening should be left for her through which to suckle her baby, and for a year the child was brought to her breast. To this day Servian mothers visit her tomb, which is marked by a milky-white stream of water trickling down the fortress wall. In later times substitutes, as horses, lambs, and cocks, were sacrificed at the laying of foundation-stone of church or wall or bridge.

Revolted as we are at the story of these cruel customs, we must remember that they are not due solely, but only in lesser degree, to man's wickedness or thirst for blood. We can only understand them by knowing what has been his history through long, slow descent—or, to speak

more truly, ascent—from animals in which ape and tiger characters prevailed; history far within the period when he became erect, two-footed man, still waging fierce struggle with lower animals, and with his fellows, in which he or they must die. Then shall we learn that the slaying of the aged and the exposure of new-born babes were due, in the first instance, more to the hardness of man's surroundings than to the hardness of his heart.

Therefore, in reading of the sacrifices which have made this fair earth a human slaughter-house, we have to strive to enter—and this is well-nigh impossible—into the state of mind and surroundings of barbaric people, when to them there seemed no other way of appeasing the wrath or satisfying the demands of unseen but dreaded gods, who were pictured as with passions like unto ours, but as bigger and stronger than men. Nor should what was done in rude, rough ages surprise us, when we remember that the like ideas prevail, under softer disguises, among ourselves. For it is a vital part of the Christian religion, or what is more correctly called its doctrine, that God was so angry with man's first parents

for disobeying His commands that He would forgive them, and all mankind who came after them, their sins, only because Jesus Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for them. So even the religion of the most civilized nations is founded upon belief in the need of shedding of blood to secure the pardon of the deity, which belief is, of course, a survival from barbaric times. For the Christian religion is largely mixed with pagan customs and heathen practices which existed among the Jews, and which it has taken into itself by contact with the old Aryan religion which its missionaries sought to supplant. Moreover, its founder shared the superstitions and false ideas of his time about demons, the coming day of judgment, and eternal fire, 'prepared by the devil and his angels' to burn up the wicked. To know this is to understand its history, to learn how it has come to pass that the only abiding part of the teaching of Jesus, namely, that we prove our love of the unseen God by love and service of man, was made of little effect, and belief in certain creeds and the need of performing certain rites insisted on as the things necessary to man's

salvation. It is over these creeds—"words, words, words," as Hamlet says—and over these rites, each one of which is borrowed from older religions, and therefore is of barbaric origin, that the sects have wrangled for centuries, and in darker days sent one another to the dungeon and the stake. It is these which have been the bitter foes of knowledge, and of the progress that comes only through knowledge; the kindlers of strife between parents and children and friends, and which are even now only very slowly being given up as the source whence they came is made clear, and as their place is shown to be among the man-made guesses and devices which held sway over life until the truth of things was known.

The Aryan families were grouped together into 'sibs' or clans, bands of 'blood-brothers' of each family uniting under one chief for common weal and action. All outside the clans were looked upon as enemies—the Latin word *hostis* formerly meant both 'stranger' and 'enemy'—for man's long struggles with his fellow-men for food and other needs of life had caused him to look upon

everyone not of kith or kin as a foe to be vanquished, killed in sacrifice, or kept as a slave. But as intercourse between different clans widened, chiefly through carrying on a sort of barter or exchange of articles, in which lay the germs of the vast trade between nations of the world, a more peaceful state of affairs arose, and with this, better understanding between man and man, the growth of a feeling that each must respect the rights of the other; and thus there came about humaner manners and more security to life and property.

One great hindrance to unity, however, was in the revenge wrought for wrongdoing, which was a sacred duty on the part of the family or clan, being often entrusted to the 'blood-brotherhood.' Until men were gathered into tribes, having laws for the punishment of crime, they had no other course but 'to take the law into their own hands,' and the duty of vengeance—'eye for eye, tooth for tooth, limb for limb, and life for life'—was transmitted from father to son until the 'blood-feud' was wiped out by the slaying of the wrongdoer or of his kin. The 'vendetta'—so called from Latin *vindicta*, 'vengeance'—exists in Corsica

and other parts of the world to this day, and is in especial force among the wandering Bedouins. Such a custom was the earliest attempt to maintain rights and secure punishment, but, as manners became gentler, atonement or compensation was made in money or money's worth; *wergeld* or 'man-money' being given to the injured person, or, if killed, to his relatives according to his station in life and the nature of the injury, even a finger-nail having its value. The fines which people who break the law now-a-days have to pay are a survival of ancient law. What men did for themselves in these matters, the nation to which they belong does for them. When any cases arose upon which the elders or judges of the clans felt it hard to decide, they were settled by the practice of ordeal, or the judgment of the deity, as it was believed to be. The accused person had to submit to some test, such as being passed through fire or thrown into water, and, in the words of the law-book of the ancient Hindus, 'he whom the flame does not burn and he who does not float without effort on the water, must be accepted as truthful.' Trial by ordeal

was not abolished in England till the early part of the thirteenth century, and all through the 'dark ages' it was defended by both law and clergy. It is still universal among the wild tribes of Central India, and other barbarous peoples.

Speaking broadly, for no hard and fast lines can be drawn, we see the Indo-European peoples slowly advancing from the barbarism of the New Stone Age to the dawning civilization of the Bronze Age and even the Iron Age; the families uniting into clans, and the clans uniting into tribes under a *rex* or 'ruler,' who led them in war, and saw that the laws made by the elders for the common weal were duly kept. Wherever hill or rising ground offered the advantage, there the centre of defence was fixed, the primitive 'parliaments' or 'palavers' held, the dead buried, the altar for sacrifice raised, and the rude temple reared.

There was no uniform rate of progress. Some of the tribes would go ahead more quickly than the others, according to the greater or lesser advantages of the lands whither they migrated, the differences of climate, soil, and food; the nearness or distance of great rivers, which were easy highways of travel

and of trade; the strength or weakness of other races whose lands they invaded; and all the manifold subtle causes which help or hinder the future of peoples, leaving one tribe in the Stone Age, while another tribe marches on to the discovery of metals. The evidence of language helps us to see that the Aryans who migrated eastwards, the ancestors of Hindus and Persians, were in near relation for a long time, and outstripped the tribes who tarried in Europe, the successive advance amongst some of whom is laid bare in the varied relics amongst the ancient dwellings built on piles in the Swiss lakes. These clearly show how the earliest lake-dwellers passed from the use of stone to that of copper, then of bronze—a compound of copper and tin,—and lastly, of iron; from the dressing of skins to the weaving of garments; from the gathering of seeds as food to the planting of them in the ground, which they turned up with ploughs made of stag's antler or of metal-tipped crooked bough, and therefore from the unsettled state of shepherds to the fixed state of tillers and owners of the soil.

One thing at least stands out clearly; that the

Aryans were the ancestors of the great civilizing peoples of the modern world.

B. The Religion of the Primitive Aryans.

Having thus far learned, as best we can, what was the mode of life among the Aryan clans, we will next strive to learn what gods, if any, they worshipped, and what rites they performed.

Now it is by no means easy to find out this, because the beliefs of barbaric peoples are made up of confused and often opposed ideas, and the same things are called by different names, so that the numerous gods become mixed up with one another. But help towards getting a clear idea of what seems a hopeless tangle comes in two ways. First, we study the beliefs and practices of barbaric races still existing, and in comparing these with one another we see that people at the same low stage of culture explain things very much in the same way all the world over. Next, we study the beliefs and customs and sayings of unlettered folk in out-of-the-way parts of civilized countries, and we find amongst them a mass of

superstitions which crop up in their talk and daily life in the oddest ways, and which we see have their source in crude, barbaric ideas. Then we compare these two groups of facts with what is known of the old Aryan religion, and find such close likenesses between the three as leave us in no doubt as to the barbaric stage of thought of the several Aryan clans. In this matter language is a great aid. We know that the Aryans had advanced far enough to have ideas about their surroundings, the broad earth and the over-arching sky, and to express those ideas in daily life. For it has been shewn that they were not wandering savages like their remote forefathers; having time and thought for nothing save the needs of the body. They were well on the road to a more settled state, when man no longer "lives by bread alone," and has leisure to cast eye outwards and inwards, to strive to spell out the meaning of the world and of his place in it. With all things around him unknown or misunderstood, and under the rule of senses that had long been largely exercised in keeping him on the alert against his numberless foes, his experience had

begotten fear of things, and never any feeling of trust or love.

So we may take it that the religion of the primitive Aryans was akin to that of peoples in the like barbaric stage; a mixture of what is commonly called Shamanism, or belief in magic, charms, and all that this includes, and of worship of the powers of nature, both great and small, living and non-living, in all which they saw life. For man made not only the gods, but everything else, in his own image. He had no other standard by which to measure them; he lived, therefore all things, rolling stones, waving trees, running water, moving cloud, sun, moon, and stars, lived. In other words, they were the abode of spirits, mostly of harmful nature. Where two or more names were given to the same object the idea of two or more persons sprang therefrom. The spread of this idea would be aided by the division of lifeless things thus believed to have a personal life into masculine or feminine gender, of which some languages afford such curious and, to those who are learning them, tedious illustrations. And when kinsfolk and foes alike died, they came to

man in his dreams, which are real events to the barbaric mind; or he went forth to them in his sleep, when for a time the soul left the body, so that earth, air, and sky were alike the dwelling-places of spirits, 'as the sand by the seashore innumerable.'

As it would be man's aim to secure the favour of beings the measure and nature of whose power was unknown, he sought the help of those who pretended, or in truth believed themselves, to have control over things seen and unseen, and who by charms and spells and such like magic arts, by shouts and gestures, and all the apparatus of their craft, drove away the thunder, brought down the rain, frightened away the spirits, and warded off disease and death, both of which all barbaric people believe to be due to bewitching and sorcery.

'As what man sees is, so have his thoughts been,' and the scenery amidst which a people lives determines the character of its gods. In a barren rocky desert there will be worship of stones, but not of trees, and the imagination, unfed by the varying colours, sounds and movements of these and

other living things, will there conceive gods stern and strong, ungentle and unpitying. The warm climate of Europe at the close of the Great Ice Age favoured the growth of vegetation, and the whole of the northern part became covered with dense forests in which oaks of large size abounded, the wooded region stretching beyond the Arctic circle. This in large degree explains why amidst the varied objects of their worship, which included stones as well as living things, that of *trees* played so leading a part among the Aryans, relics of it surviving all over Europe in the groups of customs and festivals connected with agriculture and the seasons. All through nature there are the ever-recurring events of birth and death, of fruitfulness and decay, of destruction for the sake of reproduction, every grave being the cradle of another form of life. Hence all the festivals rich in flowers and fruits, and the offering of these to the gods of fruitfulness: hence, too, the ceremonies of weeping over the death, and of rejoicing over the birth, of nature-gods.

Tree-worship, like all nature-worship, is based upon the old belief in all-present life spoken of

above. Trees and plants grow, blossom, bring forth fruit, bleed when cut (sounds issuing from them sometimes when wounded), wither, become old and die. So they were credited with a life like that of man. The Dyaks of Borneo believe that when a plant is sickly its soul has left it for a time, and that when rice perishes its soul has fled away. The Ojibways believed that trees had souls, and formerly would not cut them down unless withered, because it put them to pain. It is an old English superstition that to cut an oak is unlucky, and an old writer says that 'when an oake is falling, before it falles it gives a kind of shriekes or groanes, as if it were the genius (*i.e.*, spirit) of the oake lamenting.' Any hollow-trunked tree emitting sounds when the air was calm was regarded as the dwelling of a god. The Iroquois believed in three beautiful sisters who were the spirits of the corn, the bean, and the squash. From North America across Europe, and far away to New Zealand, we find legends of descent of men from trees, so fully does the uncivilized mind believe in a common life—speech, thought, feeling — shared by man, brute and

plant, so that to it there is nothing wonderful in the stories of men being turned into trees and trees into men. In Norse myth the sons of Bor, as they walked by the sea-shore, took two trees and made men out of them. 'The man was called Ash and the woman Elma, and from them sprang mankind.' In Greek myth the chief god Zeus made a race of men from the ash, which is the famous three-rooted world-tree of a later Norse creation-myth. In Persian myth the first human pair grew in the form of a single stalk, which sprang from seed from a man-like being, created from perspiration. At the end of fifteen years the stalk put forth fifteen leaves, but still the pair were as one, and without souls. Then Ahura-mazda said to them, 'Be human beings, become the parents of the world.' Then they became man and woman, thinking good thoughts, but soon afterwards thinking evil thoughts. In New Zealand myth, Tane-nui-a-ranga took a tree as his wife, and his offspring were trees and not men. Then he took soppy mud (as in the Hebrew creation myth it is also narrated that the Lord God took moist earth wherewith to make the first

man), mixed it with sea sand, and made it into the shape of a woman, breathed on it, and thus gave her life. In all barbaric thought breath is connected with life, and very naturally so, because when a man dies he ceases to breathe. Such ideas as the foregoing lead up to the widespread belief that trees are the abode of sprites, nymphs, hamadryads (as the Greeks called them), who die with the tree in which they dwell, and also of higher spirits than these, even of the immortal gods. And the same ideas explain the sacred character given to forests and groves, which are the oldest temples in all wooded countries. Schrader, a learned German, tells us that without doubt the old Indo-European word for 'tree-trunk' had first the meaning of 'sacred tree-trunk,' and then 'temple,' which confirms what his fellow-countryman the famous Grimm says: 'Temple also means *wood*. What we figure to ourselves as a built and walled house, resolves itself the further back we go into a holy place untouched by human hands, embowered and shut in by self-grown trees. There dwells the deity veiling his form in rustling foliage of the boughs; there is the spot where the

hunter has to present to him the game he has killed, and the herdsman his horses and oxen and rams.' Speaking of the Celts and Teutons he adds: 'I am not maintaining that this forest worship exhausts all the ideas our ancestors had formed of deity and its dwelling-place, it was the chief one. Here and there a god may haunt a mountain-top, a cave of the rock, a river, but the grand general worship of the people has its seat in the *grove*.' Thither they repaired to learn what the trees could tell of the future, and what messages from the gods were delivered through the sighing, trembling leaves. No idols or other graven objects of worship were set up, the bloody sacrifices being offered to the unseen spirits of the grove and sky. One of the most curious examples of the ancient belief in connection between man and tree is supplied from classic sources. Three miles from Aricia, an ancient town on the Alban Hills, a few miles from Rome, there was a famous grove and temple to Diana of the grove, on the northern shore of the lake under the cliffs on which the modern village of Nemi stands. The priest of that temple, which was held in high

repute throughout Italy, was called Rex Nemorensis, or 'King of the Grove,' and, in later times, he was always a runaway slave. But the strangest thing about him was that he must be a murderer, because he could obtain the priestly office only by killing the man who held it, and therefore, when he had secured it, he had to be always on the alert against being attacked. Lord Macaulay, in his poem of the 'Battle of the Lake Regillus,' in the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, refers to it thus:

> 'From the still glassy lake that sleeps
> Beneath Aricia's trees—
> Those trees in whose dim shadow
> The ghostly priest doth reign,
> The priest who slew the slayer
> And shall himself be slain.'

This priest-king kept special guard over a sacred tree, and if any runaway slave could succeed in breaking off a branch of it, the priest was compelled to fight him in single combat. Now we know that this custom existed down into historical times, because the Emperor Caligula gave orders that the priest, who during his reign had long been left unattacked, should be attacked and killed. But its origin and reason had even

then become altogether forgotten, and it is only quite lately that these have been made clear, and shewn to be connected with the group of rites and ceremonies which gathered round tree-worship. And the explanation as given in Mr Frazer's 'Golden Bough' is this. The tree was thought to be the abode of a spirit; it was often addressed and treated as a king, while the priest was regarded as an incarnation of the tree-spirit on whom depended the fruitfulness of the soil. And in that universal belief among barbaric races that there is a real and vital connection between one living thing and another, and often between one non-living thing and another, we find the key to the belief that if the priest-king of Aricia was suffered to live on until he became decrepit by age, then the earth would become old and feeble also, and trees be barren and seeds infertile. So, to prevent this, he was not allowed to reach old age, and when his decline of strength was proved in his being unable to hold his post against the aggressor, he was killed, and his power and vigour were believed to pass into his successor.

The sacred tree from which the runaway slave

sought to break off a bough—probably the mistletoe, as Mr Frazer suggests—was in all likelihood an oak. For from the earliest times the chief place in Aryan tree-worship was given to the oak, the ash ranking next in sacredness. 'Its worship is attested for all the great branches of the Aryan stock in Europe.' It was the principal object of worship of both Celts and Slavs. It was the chief god among the Germans, and is 'certainly known to have been adored by them in the age of heathendom, and traces of its worship have survived in various parts of Germany almost to the present day,' while a former reference to superstitions about it in England (p. 93) evidences late worship of it here. The 'gospel oaks' of our various parishes, so called because the clergyman read the Gospel under them when 'beating the bounds,' are the oaks sacred to Thor which were planted to mark the limits of shire or manor or field. 'Amongst the ancient Italians the oak was sacred above all trees. The image of Jupiter on the Capitol at Rome seems to have been, in the first instance nothing but a natural oak. At Dodona, perhaps

the oldest of all Greek sanctuaries, Zeus was worshipped as present in the sacred oak, and the rustling of its leaves in the wind was his voice.'

With belief in trees as the dwelling-place of gods, belief in their healing power was of course closely linked, and this applies especially to the ash, the virtues of the sap of which are still believed in by unlearned country folk. The mistletoe, when growing on an oak, which was a rare occurrence, was called 'heal-all.' When thus found, the Druids, who were the medicine-men and charm workers of the old Aryan religion, ascribed the growth directly to the gods, and at certain seasons, after feast and sacrifice, the chief Druid, clad in a white robe, cut the mistletoe with a golden sickle, caught it in a white cloth, and carried it home on a waggon drawn by two bulls which had until then never felt the yoke. And in the custom amongst ourselves of hanging up a sprig of mistletoe at Christmas time, we have a relic of the belief in the power of the plant to work love-charms and otherwise be the channel of virtues to man. The famous group of standing stones named Stonehenge, which encircled

some primitive burial place, is believed to have also been at some remote time the seat of worship of a sacred tree.

Besides the worship of stones, trees, rivers, and such like things near at hand, the Aryans worshipped the sun, the shining sky, the rosy dawn, the wind and thunder, all of which came in course of time to be regarded as gods 'made in the likeness,' and having the passions, of men. But the names given to these greater powers of nature, although here and there alike, differ too much for us to say with any certainty how far the primitive Aryans looked upon them as gods, that is, as spiritual beings. There is one root word, *div*, 'to shine,' from which have sprung a host of words denoting day, noon, sky, and finally, god, as, for example, the Latin *divus* and *deus*; the Celtic *duw*, which means any god, and *dia*, a god; the Persian *daeva*, a demon or evil spirit.

And there is an allied group of words which is full of interest as shewing that the primitive Aryans looked on heaven and earth as many barbaric peoples have looked on them, namely, as father and mother, whose offspring are men,

animals, and plants. We have in Sanskrit *Dyaus-pitar;* in Latin, *Diespiter* or *Jupiter,* in Greek *Zeu-pater,* each meaning 'sky-father.' (In Norse *Dyaus* appears as *Tyr,* in Old High German as *Ziu,* and in Anglo-Saxon as *Tiu,* whence our word Tuesday.) Mother Earth, the spouse of heaven, was called *Prithivî-matar;* by the Greeks *Gœa* or *Demeter;* by the Northern races *Nerthus, Frigga,* or *Jord,* who was wife of Woden or Odin and mother of Thor. Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers called upon the earth as 'men's mother.'

Such an idea occurs naturally to the untaught mind, for the heavens seem to rest on the earth, and in closest connection with it is the widespread myth by which man seeks to explain the parting or rending asunder of Heaven and Earth, whereby light and air came to their offspring.

In Maori or New Zealand myth, Rangi, the Heaven, lay upon Papa, the Earth, and all was darkness, so that their children took counsel together, some voting for slaying their parents, and others for rending them apart. One after another vainly tried to do this, till at last Tanemahuta pushed hard with his head and feet. Then Rangi

wailed, and Papa said, 'Why this murder? why destroy us?' But still Tanemahuta pushed and pushed till Rangi was driven far away into the air, and then there was clear light on the earth, and the children who had been hidden between Rangi and Papa multiplied.

Then the legend, illustrating the quaint and often beautiful poetry of many of the Maori stories, adds: 'Though Rangi and Papa had been separated, they still loved each other. The mist and dew are the tears of Papa for Rangi, and are the messengers in the form of clouds to carry the damp air and steam up to Rangi, and when the west wind blows it is Rangi tickling the ears of Papa.'

In one of the legends of the Pacific races (to whom the Maoris are allied) the heavens are said to have fallen down, and to have been pushed up by a giant god, while in another version this work was done by two brothers. They had a third brother, whose right eye was plucked out and thrown up to the sky, where it became the sun, the left eye being then plucked out and thrown up, becoming the moon. The Chinese have a

legend about a person named Puangku, who in like manner sundered the heaven and earth, they being once 'pressed down close together.' In Greek myth Uranus, the heaven (from a root *var*, 'to cover'), grandfather of Zeus, and Gæa, the heart, were husband and wife, and their many children hated Uranus for hiding them between the hollows of their mother's breasts, so that they were shut out from light. Gæa took their part, and gave Cronus, the youngest son, an iron sickle wherewith he cut his father and mother apart. As in New Zealand myth, some of Rangi's children clave to him; so in Greek myth Oceanus, the water-god, remained faithful to Uranus. Relics of the like myth are found also in the Vedas, where Dyaus and Prithivî are spoken of as severed by their child Indra. In Norse myth the mutilation is more complete, as the creation-myth already cited shows, wherein the flesh and bones and blood of the world-giant Hymi or Ymir supply the materials for the clouds of heaven and the seas and mountains of earth.

C. Aryan Mythology.

The illustrations just given are a part of the enormous mass of myths and legends, of folk and fairy tales, which comprise what is called the 'mythology' of barbaric peoples (from Greek *muthos*, a fable, and *logos*, a discourse). Under this term, which also embraces much that makes up the raw material of their theologies, or ideas about the gods, are included the nature-myths of which the foregoing legend of the rending asunder of heaven and earth is a specimen; the deeds of the greater and lesser gods and goddesses, their fightings and feastings and love-affairs, as when the sons of god visit the fair daughters of men; and the legends of battle between heroes and monsters, when the victor-hero sets free treasures which have been stolen and hidden by the monster, and thus renders help to men. In Hindu myth it is the combat between Indra and the dragon Vritra; among the Romans it became the fight between Hercules and the cattle-robbing monster Cacus; with the Greeks, among other like tales, it was the battle between Apollo and the terrible snake

Pythôn; in old Norse legend, between Sigurd and the coiled dragon Fafnir; and in Christian myth between St George and the Dragon. What grave form the battle took in the old Persian religion, and how the Satan of later Jewish belief was borrowed therefrom, is told later on.

It is these and other myths which form the subject of the great epics or poems narrating events in the career of some hero, as in England the tales of King Arthur and his Round Table Knights; in Norseland, the tales of the Volsungs; in Greece, the Iliad and Odyssey; in Finland, the Kalevala; in India the Mahâ Bhârata; and also of the minor stories found among many peoples, such as the skill of Tell the archer, and the piteous mistake of the prince who slew the faithful hound Gellert that had saved his child from the wolf. Then, told in varied form, there is the great group of stories of heroes fighting with monsters—giants and dragons—for the rescue of fair maidens from dark dungeons and enchanted castles; of love-sick princes crossing wide seas in quest of the princess whom they wish to marry, and doing many deeds of daring to win

her; of brave and cunning dwarfs that kill greedy, cruel and stupid giants; of strange creatures that lived in forest, in stream and underneath the ground—in Northern lands, known as nixies or water-sprites; as trolls or hill-dwarfs; as golden-haired elves that come from Elf-home at moonlight to dance in fairy rings upon the grass and make the air gently tremble with the soft music of their magic harps; in Southern lands, the naiades or water-nymphs, the satyrs and fauns and pigmies —and, all the world over, the beings too many to name, that dwell in wonder-land. Then there are the legends that people the air with the spirits of the dead, with sheeted ghosts, thirsty vampires, witches and the like; that tell of strange powers for good or evil possessed by living and lifeless things; of men changed into bears and wolves and stones; of maidens changed into swans; of waters of life and death and forgetfulness; of magic horns, lamps, cudgels, table-cloths and necklaces; of flasks that fill the ocean and talismans that open hidden stores of gold and gems; legends accounting for the cross on the back of the ass, the marks on the haddock, the bear's stumpy tail,

the robin's red breast, the wasp's narrow waist, the aspen's quivering leaf, the echoes among the hills, the saltness of the sea, the 'man' in the moon, and so on. In the course of time, what was told about some vague hero or ancestor has been tacked on to some real person or event; the gods of early myths have become the heroes of mock history, and these again the giants and knights of fairy tales; old fables and traditions have come to be regarded as true history, and, when found in sacred books, to be believed in as of divine origin; while history and fable have been so mixed together that the greatest care has to be taken to sift the true from the false in the records of nations and of the lives of great men, such as Cyrus, Charlemagne, and far greater names than theirs.

Mythology, therefore, covers a very wide field both in space and time, and embodies ideas of man about things which shed no small light upon his past history. This view of a serious meaning lying at the centre of many a legend and fireside tale is due to the spirit of enquiry in our day, which regards nothing as 'common or unclean,' but which looks even on a seemingly childish

legend as possibly holding some truth, or, it may be, falsehood, which makes clearer old ways of thought and old views of things.

Thus it has been with nursery tales, which of all things one might think would be the least likely to throw any light upon the past, or to yield instruction as they yield amusement. For some years learned men have taken down these tales from the lips of old goodies and unlettered peasants in Germany, Russia, Scotland and other parts of Europe, of 'ayah' servants in India, and of natives of Zululand, New Zealand, Polynesia, North America and many other distant lands, and on putting them side by side, have traced a strong likeness running through the larger number of them, both Aryan and non-Aryan. Up to the last few years, only the Aryan had been thus compared, and the likenesses between them were accounted for by supposing that, when the primitive clans separated, each carried with it the stock of legends and household tales which were common to all. But as this implies that the Aryans were very much more cultured than we know them to have been, that explanation falls to the ground.

Another reason, to which many learned men have given support, is that the tales are borrowed from the East, being brought from that story-loving, story-telling clime by various travellers—pilgrims, pedlars, soldiers and gypsies—from time to time. And no doubt this does hold good for a large number of folk-tales and fables, but it cannot apply to those which have been collected in remote parts from the mouths of unread and untravelled folk. Of the beginning of myths and legends and folk-tales, except that they convey the crude ideas of barbaric minds, we know nothing. In the form in which we have them, they have gained much from the story-teller's art, one man adding a touch here, another a touch there; and many changes have come over them in the long lapse of time. But they are the outcome of that distant past when everything was looked at through the coloured glass of fancy, and this, though real enough to man in what is called his myth-making stage, shaped and clothed all his thoughts. Even for us, in this matter-of-fact age, what greater charm and impressiveness things have when put into story form! So true are Tennyson's lines:

> Where truth in closest words shall fail,
> When truth embodied in a tale
> Shall enter in at lowly doors.

When we see of what strange, often gruesome, elements many of the old tales are made up: men changed into beasts, beasts into men; queens bringing forth puppies: frogs wooing princesses; women marrying animals; cannibal-giants; inanimate things, as stones, spittle, blood and bones, talking; sun swallowing moon; moon eating up stars; all which, and a number more of like unreal impossible things occur in tales the world over, we are sure that they embody what those who framed them verily believed; that they are due to savage ways of explaining things, and to savage belief in the actual happening of what is thus narrated.

And through such stages of belief the primitive Aryans passed, because no races have ever appeared fully equipped, like the fabled Minerva of the Greeks, in all knowledge and wisdom. Their household tales prove this. The Norse story of 'The Giant who had no heart in his body' is one of a world-wide group of stories in which

lies the savage idea that a man's soul can be taken out of his body and hidden away for safety, but that whoever can get hold of it, and injure or destroy it, can thereby cause injury or death to its owner. The German story of 'Rumpelstiltskin' is another of a world-wide group of stories in which lies the savage idea that a man's name is a part of his very self, and that whoever can find out that name has the man in his power.

Another proof of old barbaric ideas—whether borrowed or not, as in some cases, is of no matter, —lying at the base of Aryan mythology is in certain repulsive features of the Greek mythology, otherwise so full of beauty and poetry, as in the stories of Cronus maiming his father and swallowing his own children; of Tantalus roasting his son and giving the gods his flesh to eat; and of Œdipus killing his father and marrying his own mother.

The more we compare the ideas and beliefs and customs of which tales and legends preserve record, however widely we find them scattered, the more do we see that just as people at the same low level make use of the same rude tools and weapons, so do they explain themselves,

and the world and all things therein, in much the same way. When we group all the tales together we see how few and how similar are their incidents; it is in 'ringing the changes' on these that they differ. We may compare them to the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, from which many thousands of words are formed.

So I shall feel that this book thus far has not been written in vain if it helps you to see that the more we read and ponder and observe, the more shall we note that the things in which men all the world over are unlike are as nothing to the things in which they are like.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANCIENT CELTIC AND TEUTONIC RELIGIONS.

MUCH of what has been said in the foregoing chapter holds good for the religions of the various Aryan peoples after they had become more civilized. For although they came in the long course of time to outgrow the crude and confused beliefs of their ancestors, these beliefs remained the foundation or the 'natural seed' of the higher ideas about the gods to which they had attained. There was no time in their history, as there has never been a time in the history of any race, when all things, all old ideas, have suddenly passed away, and when all things have become new. The higher knowledge which man has gained is an outgrowth from the lower knowledge, and this, like the outcrop of older rocks above the newer rocks, as well as their fusion together, which we see in the crust of the earth, often overlays or is

mingled with more modern beliefs. 'Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,' and only as knowledge as to the true nature of man's surroundings has increased, has there been progress in his ideas and his conduct.

Bearing this in mind, let us try to find out what was the religion of the Aryan folks in whom we are most interested after their separation from the other tribes, namely, the Celts and the Teutons, under which latter term is commonly included the Germans, Scandinavians, and English or Anglo-Saxons. We have travelled a long way from the dim period when the primitive Aryans wandered with their flocks and herds over Central Europe, but although we reach a time when the leading clans had settled, some eastwards and some westwards, partly subduing and partly mixing with other races, we shall find how much of the old beliefs they kept. And although centuries have passed since their conversion to Christianity, the like applies to it, for, as already noted, some of the pagan gods were changed into Christian saints, some of the old rites and customs were

adopted under new names by the Church; the sacred character of many a holy well and healing herb retained; and the wooden statues of the guardian deities which had become black by long burial, dug up and enshrined as black Madonnas.

It is probable that the Christian religion had been made known at least in some degree by the end of the third century to almost all the races with which the Romans had intercourse. It had by that time passed from Greece and Italy into Gaul, and during the fourth century had won converts from the barbarous people that dwelt on the banks of the Rhine. The Goths were the first Teutonic converts, but centuries passed before Bavarians, Frisians and Saxons had adopted the new faith.

Of its first entrance into Britain we know nothing. The event has become mixed with fables such as that about the first preaching of it here by Joseph of Arimathea, which we can put in the same list with the fable of his bringing the Holy Grail, or vessel containing the last drops of Christ's blood, with him, and of the visit of the prophet Jeremiah

to Ireland. But that it had taken root in the early centuries is shewn by the presence of three British bishops at a council held at Arles in France, A.D. 314. When, a century after, the Romans, no longer able to spare the soldiers necessary for garrisoning the island, abandoned it, the invasion of the Jutes and other German tribes gave a severe check to Christianity, which was in fact swept away for a time wherever these barbarous folk got footing. In 595, Gregory the Great, the pretty story about whom and the fair-haired British captive youths in the Roman slave market is well known, acting on a resolve made before he became pope, sent Augustine to England, and this mission led to the return of the islanders to the faith. But the conversion of the Northern nations was later, the Danes becoming Christians in the tenth century, the Norwegians in the early part of the eleventh century, and the Icelanders in the latter part of the same century.

Now these facts as to the slow success of Christianity among races with whom it had been centuries in contact, and as to its ebb and flow

in Britain, help us to see how it became more or less mixed with pagan ideas. It was a foreign religion, requiring the people to believe new and strange things, things often very puzzling and hard to understand, and had it also required them to give up all their old ideas and all their forms of worship of gods, who were very real to them, gods whom their forefathers had worshipped for ages, it would have made even slower progress. So its missionaries wisely let the change be as gentle as possible, gradually converting the old shrines into Christian temples and baptizing gods and goddesses with new names, that their help might be still invoked as saints in heaven, the old spells and enchantments being wrought by the aid of the Holy Ghost instead of by Odin. For example, it was a pagan custom in both Rome and Germany to carry the image or symbol of a divinity round the fields in order to ensure their fertility, and at a later time, when Christianity prevailed, the image of a saint or his symbol was carried about for the same purpose. And the change of names just spoken of is well shown in the following old German poem of the ninth or tenth century.

Old Version.	*Christianized Version.*
Phol and Woden went to the wood ; then was of Balder's colt his foot wrenched ; then Sinthgunt charm'd it, and Sunna her sister ; then Frua charm'd it, and Volla her sister ; then Woden charm'd it, as he well could, as well the bone-wrench, as the blood-wrench, as the joint-wrench ; bone to bone, blood to blood, joint to joint, as if they were glued together.	Jesus rode to the heath, There he rode the leg of his colt in two, Jesus dismounted and heal'd it ; Jesus laid marrow to marrow, Bone to bone, flesh to flesh ; Jesus laid thereon a leaf, That it might remain in the same place.

1. *The Celtic Religion.*

The materials for our knowledge of this are very scanty, consisting of a few passages from classic authors and of some inscriptions on altars and monuments. The best account is given by Julius Cæsar, who however tells us nothing about the gods worshipped by the insular Celts, that is, the Celts of Britain and Ireland, but only about the gods of the

Celts living in Gaul. For the Celts consisted of two branches: the Goidelic, who were the first invaders of Britain; and the more civilized Brythonic or Gaulish, who came to this island later, driving the Goidelic Celts into Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland. Some of the gods of the Gaulish Celts struck Cæsar as in some respects like those of certain gods of Rome, and he calls them by Roman names. He says that the Gauls gave the chief place to Mercury, then to Apollo, Mars, Jupiter and Minerva. *Mercury* (who is *Ogma*, the culture-god of the Irish Celts) is the inventor of the sciences, and the patron of roads and journeys; *Apollo* is the god of healing springs, one of his native titles being *Borvo*, whence the word *Bourbon*; *Mars*, once a leading deity, his wife *Morrigu* being called the Great Queen, is god of war; *Jupiter*, under the native name *Taranis*, god of fire and thunder, and bringer of the summer rain, is the sky or heaven god, whom we meet under varying names among all the Aryan peoples. He is the same as *Thor* among the Teutons, and as the god of the Esthonians on the Gulf of Finland, to whom they prayed 'that their

straw might be red as copper and the grains as yellow as gold.' *Minerva* is goddess of the useful arts, spinning, weaving, sowing and tilling. She was worshipped in Britain under the title *Belisama*, a relic of this being found in the name of the river Ribble in Lancashire, which, like the Dee and other rivers, derives its name from Celtic gods.

Besides these chief gods, and their wives or helpmates, there were many lesser gods whose names appear on inscriptions or survive in legend, or as the giants and monsters of nursery tales. Each river and lake had its particular divinity; the swirling stream and bubbling spring were homes of water-demons; every fountain had its nymph or fairy; 'the mountains were dedicated to airy powers; every village was protected by the "mothers" or guardian spirits who appear in old legends as the White Ladies, the "three fairies," the "weird sisters," and wild women of the woods.'

Crossing the Channel, we find gods like in general character to those just described, but with other names. Then among those worshipped by the Irish Celts is *Dagda*, a fire-god, whose cauldron was the vault of the sky, and whose hammer,

like that of *Taranis* and *Thor*, is the thunderbolt. The moon was worshipped under the name of *Aine* or *Anu* as queen of heaven and mother of the gods, bloody sacrifices being offered to her. 'She was upon the hills at midsummer, and at the winter feasts when the spirits of the dead were propitiated.' Among the gods common to the British and Irish tribes were *Don* and *Nudd* and *Lir* and their children. *Don* and his children were the stars and star-groups; the Milky Way was called the Castle of *Gwydion*, after one of his sons, who dwelt there, while his daughter lived in the bright circle of stars known to us as Borealis or the Northern Crown.

Nudd or *Noden* was an ocean-god, with characters akin to those of the Greek *Zeus*. A temple to him once stood on the banks of the Severn, and in Ireland he is King *Nuada*, whose wife was the goddess of the river Boyne. He was called King of the Silver Hand, because this replaced the hand which he lost in battle against the powers of darkness, as the Teuton sky-god *Tiu* lost his in the fight with Fenri's wolf, and as *Zeus* was lamed by the monster Typho. *Lir* was also a

sea-god who appears in old Welsh histories as *Lud*, to whom some think that a temple on the hill where St Paul's Cathedral stands was once erected; and, in another form of the legend, as King *Lear*.

Enough has been said to show that these old Celtic gods of Britain and Gaul are neither more nor less than the nature-gods of the primitive Aryans, but with more definite shape and functions, having passed from a vague and shadowy outline to the clearness of deities 'made in the likeness of men.' The rites and festivals attending their worship are known to us from many a lingering rustic feast, from services at cursing-stones, and at wishing-wells on the bushes around which rags are still hung, and into the depths of which pins are still dropped, 'to get the goodwill of the Piskies.' 'Like the Greeks and Romans, the Britons personified diseases, as may be gathered from the fact that in a part of Mid Wales the ague is still known by the name of *Y Wrach* or *Yr hen Wrach*, that is, the Hag or the Old Hag, and from the tradition that Maelgwn, a great warrior, died of the *Fad Felen*, or Yellow Death, which is described as a strange figure with teeth,

eyes, and hair all golden, coming from a neighbouring marsh and fixing her baleful gaze on him in a church he had entered.' This is in keeping with all barbaric belief that death is not a natural event, but due to the evil deed of some witch or demon.

Then, mixed up with this polytheism, or belief in many gods, of the Celts, we find, chiefly and in coarser form among the Goidelic branch, that strange system called Druidism, about which so much nonsense has been written. A sober enquiry into its nature has brought out the fact that it was the religion of the wilder tribes whom the Celts found in Britain, and whose rude beliefs and practices they blended with their own. The Druids belonged to the world-wide class of magicians, rain-makers, herb-doctors, fortune-tellers, sorcerers, and the like among men who pretend to have intercourse denied to others with the unseen world and with all the spirits that fill it, and to bring down by tom-tom, prayers and sacrifices—which among the Druids were ghastly and bloody—gifts for men. They and all their kin are the forefathers of any, who, by whatever

name they call themselves, profess to bind or unloose the kingdom of heaven. As shewn by the account which Cæsar gives of the Druids in Gaul, they had mastered such knowledge as could be had in his day. He says that they have schools for the instruction of youth in their lore, which is never committed to writing; that they taught the doctrine of transmigration, or the passage of the soul from one body to another after death; that they discoursed of the stars, the nature of things, and 'of the power and might of the immortal gods.' The connection of their rites with the oak has been spoken of already (see p. 100), and as bearing on the statement that Druidism prevailed more in these islands, taking a higher form on the Continent, Cæsar says, 'The doctrine is thought to have been invented in Britain and to have been carried over to Gaul, and at the present time those who wish to gain a more precise knowledge of the system travel to that country for the purpose of studying it.'

Druidism, although proscribed under the Emperor Claudius, died hard; the power of its priests passed into the hands of Christian rulers,

bishops and abbots, and their 'black art' passed into the hands of witches and fortune-tellers. Lastly, traces are found among the Celtic peoples of the custom of abstaining from the flesh of certain animals, as in the south of Britain, where the flesh of the hare or goose or domestic fowl was forbidden. Now such customs are found existing to this day among barbaric races; they are familiar to us in the division of food into clean and unclean mentioned in the Bible and still obeyed by the Jews, and they may partly explain the feeling of repulsion which we have towards eating the flesh of certain animals, as the horse and the mouse. They are due to the belief common to the barbaric mind in the descent of men from animals or plants, and consequently in the refusal to eat the animal or plant after which the tribe is named, and which name is called the 'totem' or 'clan mark.' This belief, so strange to us, but so real to uncivilized folk, has given rise not only to rules about permitted and forbidden food, but to that worship of living things which forms so large a part of the religions of lower races.

2. *The Teutonic Religion.*

Our knowledge of this religion is derived mainly from an exact account of heathen customs and traditions preserved by an Icelandic priest named Are, who lived in the eleventh century; and from two ancient books named the Elder and Younger Edda; Edda meaning 'great grandmother,' as guardian of the old tradition. The Elder Edda is a collection of about thirty mythic poems compiled, it is thought, in the twelfth century, in the Orkney or Shetland Isles, by some Icelander, descendant of the liberty-loving Norsemen who, brooking not Harold Hair-fair's tyranny, sailed westwards till they reached Iceland, which thus became the home of the old sagas. The Younger Edda, which was compiled in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is a sort of 'poetic dictionary' for the use of writers of verse. It contains the Creation myth given on page 25, and other myths the value of which is lessened by their mixture with Christian teaching about the end of the world and other matters foreign to the old Norse faith. But these two books form the Bible, as we

may call it, of the Scandinavian religion and mythology, and help to fill up the gaps in the meagre records of the Germans and Anglo-Saxons, which consist chiefly of fragments of customs, traditions, and popular tales, the great storehouse of which are the works of the brothers Grimm.

We saw that the gods of the British Celts were not quite the same as those of the Gaulish Celts, although they had certain features in common. And this applies still more to the gods of our Teutonic forefathers, the various scattered tribes of whom had each its own gods, and its customs appertaining to the worship of each, albeit underlaid by those common barbaric beliefs which Celts and Teutons and the other Aryans inherited or adopted, as, for example, that everything which happens is the work of spirits, and that all lower forms of life, and non-living things also, have souls.

The general notions, however, attaching to the gods of the old Teutonic religion will appear in the following account of the chief deities of the Edda, so far as the older ideas can be disentangled from the later ideas. Among these deities,

Woden or *Odin*, and *Thor*, his son, rank first. Their names, as is well known, survive in our Wednesday and Thursday. In the oldest songs Odin is the Heaven-god, 'husband of earth;' Alfadir, 'father of gods and men,' whose share in the work of creation is given in Norse myth; in the Viking Age he is god of war. He is also god of wisdom, which, according to one account, he gained by giving one of his eyes to the Giant of the Abyss for a draught of the deep well of Wisdom, wherefore he is the one-eyed (the Sun); or, according to another account, by stealing, after many dangerous adventures, a draught of the sacred mead which, like the soma Indra (the Hindu Zeus) got by assuming the shape of a quail; and the nectar in Greek myth and the kava of the frenzied barbaric Polynesian, is a drink of the gods, and giver of life immortal. On this theft of the divine drink one of the many myths accounting for the origin of poetry and wisdom is founded, and in the Edda the poet is spoken of as 'brewing Odin's mead.' Odin, in common with other gods, both good and evil, has power to change his form, and in the myth of the mead-theft he escapes from

the clutches of the giant Suptung by becoming an eagle.

Thor, son of the Heaven-god and the Earth-goddess, is the Thunder-god, whose anger and wrath are manifest against the foes of man. His bolt destroys the foul thick blights that are the signs of their presence, and smites through the huge cloud-masses that would crush the earth. Among his noblest titles are those of 'hallower of the earth,' for he is the friend of the husbandman, his wife being *Sif*, the golden-haired corn-goddess. Many are the legends which tell of his slaying of monsters, of his journeys over sea and through frozen torrent to seek out and destroy the frost-giants and mountain-giants, and, above all, the arch-fiend *Loki*, when that foul enemy of man and god brought about the death of the good *Balder*, whose touching story we have now to tell. *Thor* is with good reason believed to be Jack the Giant-killer of our nursery tale.

Balder is the second son of *Odin* and *Frigg*. He is the most lauded and beloved of the gods, being exceeding fair and comely, shining as the sun (he is probably a solar god), sweet-spoken,

kind, and gentle, and so wise that he could not err in his judgments.

He dwelt in a blessed abode called *Breidablik* or Broad-Gleam, wherein nothing impure could enter. But it happened that dreams portending trouble came to him and caused him such disquiet that he took counsel of the other *Anses* or fellow-gods. Then *Odin*, who was a wizard, and could awaken the dead, rode on his famous horse *Sleipnir* to the under-world to learn what the dreams meant, and *Frigg* bound all things, living and not living, except the mistletoe, which she forgot, or thought too trifling to trouble about, by a solemn oath not to hurt Balder. One day the Anses, knowing that no harm could come to Balder, were amusing themselves by throwing spears and arrows and stones at him, when Loki, angry at seeing him thus unhurt, disguised himself as an old woman, and went to Frigg to ask the meaning of it. She unwittingly told him that everything except the mistletoe had sworn to do Balder no harm. Then he went and plucked a twig of that plant, and taking it to the blind god *Hoder*, persuaded him to join in the sport, telling

him where to throw it. Hoder did as Loki bade him, and pierced Balder to the heart with the fatal twig. Then the gods mourned Balder dead, Odin, his father, weeping sorest of all; and they laid his corpse upon the dead god's ship, put fire to the pile, and launched the ship into the sea to burn. Then Hermoder, his brother, rode swiftly on Sleipnir to entreat Hell, the black goddess of death, to set the spirit of Balder free. This she consented to do, if all things would weep for him. And all things did weep, save the giantess *Thock*, who refused, saying, 'Let Hell keep what she holds.' Thock was believed to be Loki in disguise, and therefore Thor pursued him to the sea, where he changed himself into a salmon. Then Thor and some other Anses took hemp and made a net, over which Loki had either to leap or to swim out to sea. He tried to escape by leaping, when Thor grasped him, but Loki slipped through his hand, and it was by the tail only that Thor captured him. This is why, according to Norse folk-lore, the salmon has so pointed a tail.

Another opponent of Loki is *Heimdall*, culture-god, who was born of nine giant sister-maidens, and

who dwells by *Bifröst*, at the bridge-head where the rainbow reaches heaven, as a guardian-god. His ears are so sharp that he hears the grass grow in the fields, and the wool on the sheep's back. Passing by a host of minor gods and goddesses, we come to the foul brood of Loki whom a giantess bore him, namely, the wolf *Fenri;* the Snake of Earth; and the death-goddess *Hell*, whose name has been borrowed by the Christians for their place of torment of the wicked. Her hall is sleet-den; her porch, despair; her door, pale woe; her couch, care; her dish, hunger; and her spoon, starvation.

Along the shores of the earth-surrounding ocean 'lay gloomy caves, beetling cliffs and huge mountains, rocks and wastes, the home of the *Giants*, and the paths or stairs or causeways of the *Giantesses;* these monsters being called the "hill folk," the "whales of the wilds," &c.' Underground in Midyard live the *Dwarfs*, the "stone" or "boulder" folk who are helpful as well as harmful, while akin to neither are the *Ogresses*, cruel women-demons who ride on wolves at night, and work their baleful spells on men and cattle. Then there are the

three *Weirds* or *Fates*, like those in Greek and Roman mythology, 'who speak man's fate, or spin on magic web the changeful pattern of his life.'

Such, in brief outline, were the features of the spirits, great and small, with which the Norsemen filled earth and sky. Their gods and giants, huge, rough and warlike, took shape and character from the wild, bleak regions of the north. Their virtue was their strength and courage and power to endure; their work an unending fight, the light against the darkness, the heat against the killing cold. And as with the gods, so with the men who invented them. To them life was an earnest thing, war its business, bravery its duty, cowardice its greatest crime and shame. The later myths tell how, to escape death in bed and the clutches of Hell, the black goddess of the under-world, men would be carried into battle or mimic a violent death by cutting wounds in their flesh, so that Odin's Choosers of the Slain, the white maidens that ride through the air, might lead them to Valhall, where they fought at dawn, and, if wounded, were healed by noon, ready for the hog's flesh and the mead.

These more precise Viking ideas about another life followed on the earlier barbaric ideas that the spirit haunted the place where the body was laid, and on the belief, already spoken of, that death was always due to some baleful influence, as of the spirit known as '*Weird* or *Fate*, or the *Fever-Spirit*, or some demon sent by witchcraft.' The dire effects of *black* magic were dreaded, and sought to be averted by invoking the aid of *white* magic, that is, of magical arts and charms used for good purposes.

The sterner the aspects of nature, when cold reigned supreme and the Ice-Giants held all things in their merciless grip, the more welcome was the season when the hammer of Thor shivered their cruel handiwork, and when the ripening sun and the fruitful rain returned. The joy of the people went forth in song and feasting; the festival of the new year, reckoned from the longest night of the year, called Mother-Night, because the days to come sprang as it were out of her lap, being chief among the series. This was followed, in due time, by that of Easter, changed by Christianity into the festival of the Resurrection,

to herald the summer. Then were offerings made to Odin and the other gods, sacrifices of fruit and animals, and sometimes—although these came to be looked upon with horror—of human beings.

The historian Tacitus, who, like Cæsar, calls the chief gods of the Germans by Latin names, as Mercury, Hercules and Mars, says that the tribes had neither temples nor idols,—and as confirming this, we find no mention of idols or images in the Edda, —but that they worshipped in groves where the sacred white horses, from whose neighings auguries were taken, were kept at the public cost. This, among other references in old writers, shows how tree worship, which we have seen was a leading feature of the primitive Aryan religion, survived among the Northern Aryans. And unlike the Celts, among whom the Druids flourished as a powerful caste, the Teutons appear to have had no regular priesthood, but only men who did duty at certain shrines, as at Upsala, where worship was paid at the grave-mound of *Yngwe-Frey*, perhaps a once living king or hero. For these were looked upon as descendants of the gods, and were deified at death. The totem system, with its rules about

food and marriage and its common religious rites, existed among the Teutons.

When some of their tribes, the sea-roving, half-barbarous Jutes, Angles and Saxons,—afterwards grouped under the common name of the leading tribe as Angles or English,—invaded Britain, they did not leave their gods and totems behind them. With them came *Woden, Thunor* or *Thor, Tiw, Frea, Sætere* (these three last deities giving their names to Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday), and the vast horde of monsters and fairies, water-nixies, fiends, and ghosts that made life a terror by day and by night. Wherever the invaders spread, they effaced, to the utmost of their power, every trace of the Roman occupation, let the roads go to ruin, destroyed the monuments, enslaved the Celtic inhabitants, and as far as their barbarous arm could reach, stamped out Christianity with fire and sword, so that, in the words of an old writer, 'the red tongue of flame licked up the whole land from end to end, till it slaked its horrid thirst in the western ocean.' Only when, as the result of Augustine's mission, the English became Christians, did the ugly

and hateful features of pagan life slowly disappear.

We now take leave of Celts and Teutons, and without tarrying on the road, travel eastwards till we reach the lands where the Asiatic Aryans settled. This will lead me to speak of the growth of Brahmanism out of the old Aryan faith; of the rise of Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion of Persia; and of Buddhism.

After an account of these three great Aryan religions, we will cast a brief glance at the religions of China, and then say somewhat of the Semitic race, among whom Judaism and Mohammadanism had their birth.

A rough survey will thus have been taken of most of the living religions of the world, and I hope some clearer knowledge gained of the beliefs of hundreds of millions of our fellow-creatures.

As already stated, the ancestors of the Persians and Hindus had, before their separation, advanced further in civilization than the western Aryans, as shewn, among other things, by their having common terms for their gods, heroes, 'demons,'

and religious observances. They had also common words for bridge, column, battle, sword, spear, and bowstring, and could count up to a thousand. Various causes, chief among which were, probably, the larger space needed for growing numbers and the pressure of other peoples around them, led to separation, one branch moving southwards into India. In the Zend-Avesta clear mention is made of this dispute, and although we do not know all the causes which led thereto, it seems that religion had somewhat to do with it.

We learned that the old Aryan faith was a worship of the powers which were seen in action around. Out of this there was slowly growing, as the result of man's thought about things and comparison of them with one another, a sense that underneath the *many* there was the *one*, and thus he was being led to the highest of all beliefs, that 'there is one God, and none other but He.'

Among the men in whom there grew this idea of the unity of God, none stand out in purer outline than Zarathustra (commonly spelt, according to the Greek, Zoroaster). To him was given the great work of reforming, as he said, the faith of

his country, and of founding a religion which was the grandest of all the ancient Aryan creeds.

He met with bitter opposition from those who clung to the older and grosser faith, but these were worsted in the struggle; and at last the separation was complete. The tribes who would not accept the new religion had, there is reason for thinking, already crossed the passes of the high-mountain range named the Hindu Kush, and after settling in the Punjab, slowly pushed their way along the valley of the Ganges, spreading themselves in the course of centuries over India.

India is a land of mixed races, containing within its borders a greater variety of peoples, religions, and customs than any other land. Among its tangled forests and rugged hills there are remnants of a savage people whose forefathers were probably the earliest dwellers, makers of the rough stone weapons found in various parts. These were subdued by invaders from the north-west, who were of a race allied to the Finns, Lapps and Mongols, a race which seems to have covered large tracts of country, and to have laid the foundation

upon which both the Aryan and Semitic families built their higher culture. They were far above the wild creatures whom they displaced, and therefore no mean foes for the Aryans to meet. The many huge erections of stones, in the form of circles, tables, &c., which India contains, and which are older than the rock-cut temples of the Buddhists, are their handiwork. But they had to yield before the greater force and skill of the Aryans, and when caste was established, to take their place in the lowest class; their language, religion and customs being more or less altered.

Up to the time of the entrance of the Aryans into India scarcely a date is at hand to help us, neither does history become much clearer afterwards, since the Hindus have been strangely careless in such a matter: unlike the Egyptians, who put down the time when the smallest events of daily life took place.

We will now pass on to some account of the religion known as Brahmanism or Hinduism.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ANCIENT AND MODERN HINDU RELIGIONS.

HINDUISM is the religion of three-fourths of the people of India, who number in all about 250 millions, and the yearly additions to it in that country are probably larger than that of all the other great religions — Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam—put together. It differs from every one of these—Buddhism, numbering four millions of adherents; Christianity, numbering two millions; and Islam, numbering fifty millions—in this: that it had no personal founder, and that it has no rigid creed. It is a shifting pantheon, with many temples, many shrines, and all the din of their discordant rites and ceremonies. It has taken, and continues to take, into itself the many strange deities of ruder faiths; to blend with its own ritual the grosser rites of the various non-Aryan tribes,—stock and stone and devil worshippers—scattered over hill, upland, and jungle. So, under its shelter there gather deities great and small,

from heaven gods to household gods; 'deities who abhor a fly's death, or who still delight in human victims.' And to these there are ever being added the dead heroes, holy men, and men otherwise renowned, who have been exalted into gods, a practice in full swing at the present day. For these Brahmanism finds a place as incarnations of the greater gods, who seem to live too far away for human needs and interests. Thus has this ancient religion become a mazy tangle through which it is hard to find our way.

This, however, we need not now attempt. For in this chapter we are more concerned with the outgrowth of Hinduism from the primitive Aryan religion already described. To this end we must go to the Vedas, which give us a fairly clear view of Brahmanic doctrine and ritual, mixed up, as in all other scriptures, with the coarser ideas of a remoter past.

The discovery of these comparatively ancient scriptures has been a great gain, for without them we should have been ignorant of the causes which led to the founding of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, as well as of some features of the old Aryan religion in which the Vedic religion has its source.

That the narrative may flow on without too many breaks, I have removed to Note E at the end of this book, a list of the names and contents of the Hindu sacred writings, which should be read as a help to understanding this chapter.

Veda means *knowledge* or *science,* and is a word kindred to our English *wisdom, to wit,* and the many like words. Although it is used in a plural form to include four collections of hymns, there is but one true, ancient Veda, called the *Rig-Veda,* and from that our account of the old Hindu faith will be drawn.

It contains the hymns in which the Aryans who first entered India praised their gods, and the oldest of such hymns are believed to have been composed 2400 years before Christ, or above 4200 years ago. They exceed 1000 in number, and are of various lengths, from one to more than fifty verses or *ric,* meaning *praise,* hence the name *Rig-Veda,* or *Veda of praise.* Their authors are called *Rishis,* which means *seer* or *sage.*

Some 600 years before Christ every word, every verse and every syllable was counted, and

the number agrees with existing copies as nearly as one could expect. The Brahmans have the holiest veneration for the four Vedas, and believe them to be so entirely the work of God as to have existed in His mind before time began. They make a great difference between these writings and all the others, which they call *Smriti,* or *tradition,* or that which is handed down from ancient teachers by one age after another; while the Vedas and Brâhmanas are *Sruti,* or *hearing, revelation,* or that which comes direct from God.

The gods chiefly addressed in the Rig-Veda are Agni, fire; Prithivî, the earth; Maruts, the storm; Ushas, &c., the dawn; Mitra, Sûrya, &c., the sun; Varuna, the all-surrounder; Indra, the sky; and Soma, a name given at a later period to the moon. Vishnu, who afterwards became a leading god in the Hindu Trimûrti, or Trinity, is also a name for the sun in the Veda.

The earth was not placed in the highest rank; she was only partly divine. It was not so, however, with fire, that thing of mystery and shapeless power, a merciless master, a helpful servant, at whose worship

none can be amazed. Agni, god of fire (akin to Latin *ignis*, whence our word *ignite*, to *set on fire*), has more hymns addressed to him than any other god. He it is who lives among men, who is the messenger between earth and heaven, the sole guarding and guiding power left to shelter men and dispel the gloom when the sun has set. His wonderful birth from two pieces of wood rubbed together is sung in glowing language, the ten fingers of the kindler are ten virgins who bring him into being; the two pieces of wood are his father and mother. Because the butter when thrown into the flame makes it mount higher and burn brighter, it was believed to be the gift Agni loved best, and as the flame rose upwards it was believed to carry to heaven the gifts heaped upon it. This is one of many hymns to him:

'Agni, accept this log which I offer to thee, accept this my service; listen well to these my songs.

'With this log, O Agni, may we worship thee, thou son of strength, conqueror of horses! and with this hymn, thou high-born!

'May we thy servants serve thee with songs, O granter of riches, thou who lovest songs and delightest in riches.

'Thou lord of wealth and giver of wealth, be thou wise and powerful: drive away from us the enemies!

'He gives us rain from heaven, he gives us inviolable strength, he gives us food a thousandfold.

'Youngest of the gods, their messenger, their invoker, most deserving of worship, come, at our praise, to him who worships thee and longs for thy help.

'For thou, O sage, goest wisely between these two creations (heaven and earth, gods and men), like a friendly messenger between two hamlets.

'Thou art wise, and thou hast been pleased; perform thou, intelligent Agni, the sacrifice without interruption, sit down on this sacred grass!'

In our account of the religion of Zoroaster, we shall see what awe his followers felt towards fire, as the nearest emblem of the divine.

Among the gods of the air, we find hymns in the Veda to the Maruts and others, but it is Indra who receives highest praise. Dyaus, as we have already seen, was one of the names common among the undivided Aryans, but among the Hindu tribes his place was taken by Indra. Indra rose from his father, Dyaus, the sky, and from Prithivî, the earth, where she and Dyaus met, therefore Prithivî was his mother (see p. 104). This Vedic myth of Indra as their son is kept in mind at Brahman marriages, when the bridegroom says

to the bride, 'I am the sky, thou art the earth, come let us marry.' It is Indra who slays the demon Vritra, and who is refreshed for his mighty deed by drinking three lakes of *soma*, the water of strength.

The fermented juice of Soma or the moon-plant, which is akin to the common milk-weed, was a frequent offering to the gods. It led to excitement and frenzy on the part of those who took it, insomuch that it was believed to be divine, and to impart power to the gods themselves. It was offered to them in ladles, or thrown into the fire. It was thought to work miracles, and the old Aryan veneration for certain plants, common to all barbaric peoples, when found to produce stimulating effects, led to its being raised to the rank of a god, called king of heaven and earth, and conqueror of all. The hymns to Soma fill an entire book of the Veda; in one of them the worshippers sing—

> 'We've quaffed the Soma bright,
> And are immortal grown;
> We've entered into light,
> And all the gods have known.

What mortal now can harm,
Or foeman vex us more?
Through thee, beyond alarm,
Immortal God! we soar.'

The early notions of virtue and divine power abiding in the Soma, shows us a truth which is every day becoming clearer; that the things which are thought to belong only to one religion are common to many religions. The Roman Catholic priest who elevates the consecrated bread called the 'host' (from Latin *hostia*, a victim), is after all but an imitator of the old Aryan worshipper who, when he offered the Soma, raised the wooden cup that held it.

Indra is praised thus in the Rig-Veda:

'He who as soon as born is the first of the deities, who has done honour to the gods by his deeds, he at whose might heaven and earth are alarmed, and who is known by the greatness of his strength; he, men, is Indra.

'He who fixed firm the moving earth, who spread the spacious firmament; he, men, is Indra.

'He who having destroyed Vritra, set free the seven rivers; who recovered the cows; who generated fire in the clouds; who is invincible in battle; he, men, is Indra.

'He to whom heaven and earth bow down; he at whose might the mountains are appalled; he who is drinker of the

Soma juice, the firm of frame, the adamant armed, the wielder of the thunderbolt; he, men, is Indra. May we envelope thee with acceptable praises as husbands are embraced by their wives.'

Among the gods that bring the light, Ushas (akin to Anglo-Saxon, *Eostra*, goddess of spring, whence our word *Easter*) calls forth the richest songs, for she it is who chases the darkness and makes ready a pathway for the sun, and who awakens in every Brahman's breast the morning prayer which for full four thousand years has gone up from pious Hindus: 'Let us meditate on the adorable light of the divine creator; may He rouse our minds!'

Here is a fine, simple hymn to Ushas:

'She shines upon us, like a young wife, rousing every living being to go to his work. When the fire had to be kindled by men, she made the light by striking down darkness.

'She rose up, spreading far and wide, and moving everywhere. She grew in brightness, wearing her brilliant garment. The mother of the cows (that is, the mornings), the leader of the days, she shone gold-coloured, lovely to behold.

'She, the fortunate, who brings the eye of the gods, who leads the white and lovely steed (of the sun), the dawn was

seen revealed by her rays, with brilliant treasures, following every one.

'Thou who art a blessing where thou art near, drive far away the unfriendly; make the pasture wide, give us safety! Scatter the enemy, bring riches! Raise up wealth to the worshipper, thou mighty Dawn.

'Shine for us with our best rays, thou bright Dawn, thou who lengthenest our life, thou the love of all, who givest us food, who givest us wealth in cows, horses and chariots.

'Thou daughter of the sky, thou high-born Dawn, whom the Vasishthas magnify with songs, give us riches high and wide: all ye gods protect us always with your blessings.'

(Vasishtha is the name of one of the chief poets of the Veda.)

After these gladsome words the poet thinks of the many dawns that have come and gone and of the eyes that once saw them and now see them no more, and the thought finds words in a sadder song.

Of the many gods yet remaining, I can only speak of Varuna, noblest and best. For he rules over all; he governs the seasons of the year; he sets sun, moon and stars in their courses, and it is of him that the sin-stricken worshippers ask for pardon and deliverance from evil. He also surrounds them all, and his messengers note down the wrongdoings of men and cast sickness and

death upon the wicked. *Amhas,* the Sanskrit word for *sin,* is a very forceful one. It comes from a root meaning to *choke* or *throttle,* for the hold which sin has upon a man is as the grasp of the murderer on the throat of his victim.

Professor Max Müller says that 'the consciousness of sin is a leading feature in the religion of the Veda, so is likewise the belief that the gods are able to take away from man the heavy burden of his sins. And when we read such words as "Varuna is merciful even to him who has committed sin," we should surely not allow the strange name of Varuna to jar on our ears, but should remember that it is but one of the many names which men invented in their helplessness to express their ideas of the Deity.' But we must bear in mind that such verses as these represent the later teaching of the Veda. For in most of the hymns sin means not rendering praise to the gods, or not offering them gifts whereby their favour and their help in supply of worldly goods, health, and such like things, are assured.

Some of the verses in this hymn express thoughts akin to those in one of the grandest Psalms in the Bible, the 139th;

'The great lord of these worlds sees as if he were near. If a man thinks he is walking by stealth, the gods know it all.

'If a man stands or walks or hides, if he goes to lie down or to get up, what two people sitting together whisper, King Varuna knows it, he is there as the third.'

(So the Psalmist says: 'Thou compassest my path and my lying down and art acquainted with all my ways.' Verse 3.)

'This earth, too, belongs to Varuna the king, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas (the sky and the ocean) are Varuna's loins; he is also contained in this drop of water.

'He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuna the king. His spies proceed from heaven towards this world; with thousand eyes they overlook this earth. (Compare with this verses 7 to 12 of the same psalm.)

King Varuna sees all this, what is between heaven and earth, and what is beyond. He has counted the twinklings of the eyes of men. As a player throws the dice, he settles all things.

'May all thy fatal nooses, which stand spread out seven by seven and threefold, catch the man who tells a lie, may they pass by him who tells the truth.'

I must not omit a few verses from prayers in which pardon for sin is sought:

'However we break thy laws from day to day, men as we are, O god Varuna,

'Do not deliver us unto death, nor to the blow of the furious, nor to the wrath of the spiteful!'

Again :

'Wise and mighty are the works of him who stemmed asunder the wide firmaments (heaven and earth). He lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven; he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth.

'I ask, O Varuna! wishing to know this my sin. I go to ask the wise. The sages all tell me the same : Varuna it is who is angry with thee. . . .

'Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we committed with our own bodies.'

The following contains some of the finest verses in the Veda :

'Let me not yet, O Varuna! enter into the house of clay ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

'If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

'Through want of strength, thou strong and bright god, have I gone wrong ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

'Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters ; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!

'Whenever we men, O Varuna! commit an offence before the heavenly host, whenever we break the law through thoughtlessness ; punish us not, O god, for that offence!'

There is plenty of proof in the Veda that the ancient Hindus believed in a life after death.

The king of that other world is Yama. He and his sister Yami are said to have been the

first pair, and when they reached the abode of bliss to have made ready a place for those who should follow them. In Persian legend Yama appeared as Yima, ruler of the golden age and founder of Paradise.

Life with these Eastern Aryans was no mere sad, thought-filled burden, 'which though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest.' In their prayers they asked for wealth, children, long life, success in war, and withal faced the fact that life must one day have an end. They believed that in some bright place where the gods dwelt they and their loved ones would be gathered under the peaceful sway of Yama. They made offerings to the spirits of their forefathers as a pious duty, and laid the bodies of their dead in the ground 'in sure and certain hope' that the soul was safe with Yama. At a later date the body was burned on the altar of Agni, that it might ascend through him to the gods and be reunited to the spirit. There is in the Rig-Veda a hymn of surpassing tenderness and beauty, which is still used at Hindu funeral ceremonies. After some verses, in which Death is asked to harm the suppliants no

more, the body was placed in the ground with these soft, sweet words :

'Approach thou now the lap of Earth, thy mother,
The wide-extending Earth, the ever-kindly ;
A maiden soft as wool to him who comes with gifts,
She shall protect thee from destruction's bosom.

'Open thyself, O Earth, and press not heavily ;
Be easy of access and of approach to him,
As mother with her robe her child,
So do thou cover him, O earth !

'May Earth maintain herself thus opened wide for him ;
A thousand props shall give support about him ;
And may those mansions ever drip with fatness ;
May they be there for evermore his refuge.

'Forth from about thee thus I build away the ground ;
As I lay down this clod may I receive no harm :
This pillar may the Fathers here maintain for thee ;
May Yama there provide for thee a dwelling.'

Such were the hymns and prayers in which the Vedic worshippers addressed their gods as they smeared the sacred grass with soma-juice or poured butter on the fire. The

Veda contains a large number of commonplace and foolish hymns, but we judge the book, as we judge the Bible, by what in it is best.

The extracts given from its sacred literature show what a large part was played by sacrifices in Vedic religion. The duty of offering these rested in the past with the head of the family, but as the rites became more and more involved, requiring special knowledge lest they were not properly done, the performance of them fell into the hands of a special class called Brahmans, from *brahma*, a prayer or hymn. A Brahman meant nothing more than a 'singer of sacred songs,' but the duties with which he was afterwards charged led to the rise of a great and powerful priestly order which at last became a sacred caste. In the course of time the more thoughtful wearied of forms and ceremonies, and gave themselves to pondering over such high themes as the origin of the universe, the nature of the great gods, above all of Brăhma or Brahm,* and of the soul, and

* See Note F.

the relation of spirit to matter, out of which came all the endless word-spinnings that make up Hindu philosophy. On the other hand, the claims of the Brahmans to intervene between the gods and men rose higher and higher, and as interpreters of the sacred books, they built upon these a huge system by which to rule every moment of a man's life.

In Vedic times, the inhabitants were of two classes; the fair-skinned Aryans and the dark-skinned races whom they had subdued. But the Brahmans pretended that the Veda gave its sanction to a division of the people into castes. It was made to say that when Brahmâ created men, the Brahmans or priests came from his mouth, the soldiers from his arm, the traders and farmers from his thigh, and the Sudras (the conquered race in India) from his foot. The Brahmans thus set themselves over all. They laid down rules so strict about prayers and sacrifices and made the favour of the gods to depend on such trifling things, that every one was glad to secure their help to do these duties aright. The people be-

lieved that the Brahmans alone knew what foods might be eaten, what air might be breathed, what clothes might be worn, and what was the proper length of the ladle in which the offering was to be put. No wonder that against so dead a creed and against such claims as these Buddha rose in revolt and founded that great religion which overrid Brahmanism for centuries, and which, although it has scarcely any followers in the land of its birth, is still professed by hundreds of millions of human beings. The chief gods of the later Hindu religion, which has traces of the Buddhism overthrown by it, are Brahmâ, Vishnu and Siva, forming the Hindu Trinity or Trimûrti (from *tri*, three, and *murti*, form). Vishnu and Siva had their different worshippers, which gave rise to two large sects, but the Brahmans, who feared that their power would decay as these sects increased, cleverly united those two gods to Brahmâ, and the pious Hindu bows his head alike to each. In the present day Brahmâ, Vishnu and Siva are worshipped as three in one, their symbol being the sacred word *Om*. The words of an ancient Hindu poet have been thus translated :—

'In those Three Persons the One God was shown,
Each First in place, each Last,—not one alone;
Of Siva, Vishnu, Brahmâ, each may be
First, second, third, among the Blessed Three.'

Brahmâ is the Creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Siva the destroyer.

Brahmâ has neither temples nor altars of his own, but images of him are found in the temples of other gods. He is far removed from the worship of men, for as creator of all he remains in calm repose; a motionless majesty, away from the world where life is ever battling with death, and will so remain until the end of present things. He is figured as a four-headed god, bearing in his hands the Vedas, a rosary and vessels for purifying.

Vishnu receives the worship of millions, and has great honour paid him as Krishna, one of the forms in which they believe he came to earth. The *Avatárs* of Vishnu are his descents to this world from time to time to save it when ruin threatened it at the hands of king, giant, or demon, and he then comes under the disguise of man or animal. As such a divine deliverer the brightest

memories crowd round him under the myth of Krishna. A mighty demon-king, Kansa, had rule over the world, and when he heard that a child was born who would grow up and destroy him. he ordered a general slaughter of young boys, hoping thus to kill the child. But it was sent to a place of safety and grew up as beautiful Krishna, god of love, and slayer of Kansa. This was the eighth incarnation or avatár of Vishnu, his ninth being, according to some Hindu writings, as the Buddha ; and at his tenth and last, he will make an end of all things, and sleeping on the waters that will cover the world when the tortoise that holds it up sinks under his load, will produce Brahmâ, who will create the world anew.

Siva, whose name does not occur in the Vedic hymns, but whose worship prevailed from remote times in India, called forth a different class of worshippers, for fear and terror brought them to his feet. Flood and earthquake, drought and tempest, and worst of all, dark death, were his work. His queen was Kali, terrible black goddess, in whose honour very loathsome things were once done. Siva is figured with a rope

for strangling evil-doers, with necklace of human skulls, with earrings of serpents and with the sacred river Ganges upon his head. He is called 'Ganges-bearer,' because when that river descended from heaven he checked the torrent, so that the earth might bear its fall.

Besides these three great gods, there are some of the old Vedic gods who still command reverence, while the lesser gods are to be counted by millions. And we must not forget how large a share of worship is still paid to the bull and cow; a worship which may have arisen among the undivided Aryans. Brahmanism at this day includes the few who believe that nothing exists but spirit, that all else is unreal, that to get united to this spirit and thus freed from the ills of time is the true and only bliss; and the many who go their round of priest-bidden duty month by month; paying worship in June, to the river Ganges, whose sacred waters cleanse from sin and make the low-caste holy; in July, to the famous Jaganâth (Juggernaut); in August, to Krishna, and so on throughout the

year; and who expect when they die, not the meeting of friend with friend in the heaven where Yama rules, but an entrance into the body of one animal after another until, made quite pure, their soul is united to the supreme Soul.

This account, meagre as it is, has already run to greater length than I had intended. A full statement of the religions of India; land of dazzling marvels, of many races and many sects, some of them, as the Sikhs and the Jainas, important enough to take rank as separate religions; land upon which Greeks, Mohammadans, English and others have in turn set their greedy eyes; would have to tell of strangely mixed beliefs, some loftiest of any that have dwelt in the mind of man, others lowest to which poor wild savage has clung.

The future of Hinduism is full of interest. It is shutting our eyes to the facts to believe what Professor Max Müller and others tell us, namely, that it is an effete and doomed religion. It is nothing of the kind; on the contrary, it is alive to the full use of the advantages which it enjoys

as a home-grown religion over both Islam and Christianity. As Sir Alfred Lyall says in his valuable 'Asiatic Studies,' 'Brahmanism is all over India a necessary first stage for the outlying tribes towards Indian civilization.' It invites them to enter its pale; it adopts and adapts their gods and ceremonies; it gives them 'laws of custom as well as of conduct;' it feeds their wonder and their faith with a constant stream of miracles; and gives to those who can pay for it a place in its system of caste.

And it seems likely that Brahmanism, instead of dying out, will adapt itself to higher ideas as these slowly touch and act upon the lives of the millions who believe in it.

CHAPTER IX.

ZOROASTRIANISM; THE ANCIENT RELIGION OF PERSIA.

Of Zoroaster, the founder of the religion of the Pârsîs (or people of Pârs, that is, ancient Persia,) we have no trustworthy account. There are many Greek, Roman and Persian legends of the miracles which he worked and of the temptations which he overcame, but they throw little or no light upon his true history.

He was probably born in Bactria, and his name implies that he became one of the priests who attended upon the sacred fire. We are sure that he lived more than three thousand years ago, because his religion was founded before the conquest of Bactria by the Assyrians, which took place about twelve hundred years before Christ. It has been argued, chiefly from the strong likeness between Jewish and Persian legends, that he was a neighbour

of Abraham, but of this the proof is far too slender.

He was a man of mighty mind; one not content to worship powers that ruled the darkness and the light, but that seemed to have no sway over the heaving sea of human passion and sorrow. To him was given the message of One Who was Lord of all, and Who was not to Zoroaster a being like unto man. He was *Ahura*, 'Spiritual Mighty-One;' *Mazdâ*, 'Creator of All.' *Ahura-Mazdâ* (afterwards corrupted into *Ormuzd*) is thus spoken of in the Zend-Avesta, an account of the contents of which book is given in Note G.

'Blessed is he, blessed are all men to whom the living wise God of his own command should grant those two everlasting powers (immortality and purity). I believe thee, O God, to be the best thing of all, the source of light for the world. Everyone shall choose thee as the source of light, thee, thee, holiest Mazdâ! . . .

'I ask thee, tell me it right, thou living God! Who was from the beginning the Father of the pure world? Who has made a path for the sun and for the stars? Who (but thou) makes the moon to increase and to decrease? This I wish to know, except what I already know.

'Who holds the earth and the skies above it? Who made the waters and the trees of the field? Who is in the winds and storms that they so quickly run? Who is the Creator of

the good-minded beings, thou Wise? Who has made the kindly light and the darkness, the kindly sleep, and the awaking!

'Who has made the mornings, the noons and the nights, they who remind the wise of his duty?'

In a later part of the Zend-Avesta, Zoroaster asked Ormuzd what was the most powerful spell to guard against evil. He was answered by the Supreme Spirit that to utter the twenty different names of Ahura-Mazdâ protects best from evil, and thereupon Zoroaster asks what these are. He is told that the first is, 'I am;' the sixth, 'I am wisdom,' and so on until the twentieth, which is 'I am who I am, Mazdao.' Highest of all, Ahura-Mazdâ, was said to have below him angels who did his bidding, 'Immortal Holy Ones,' whose names seem to be echoes of the Vedic gods, and by whose aid good deeds are wrought, and gifts bestowed upon men.

It is wellnigh certain that Zoroaster believed in one God, and explained the mystery of evil as the work of demons ruled by an archfiend 'Angra-Mainyus,' the 'Sinful-minded,' afterwards known as Ahriman. In the course of time, as men saw that the powers of good and evil seemed equal,

neither being able to conquer, Ahriman was held to be as supreme over evil as Ormuzd was over good. The Supreme mind that had fashioned all was forgotten, and the universe was regarded as a battle-field whereon these two waged unceasing war, not as between Indra and Vritra, for a herd of heavenly cows, but for dominion over all things, Ahriman having, like Ormuzd, ranks of angels who served him.

The thought of evil around him and within him caused Zoroaster to feel heavy at heart, but it did not make him fold his hands in despair. In the Gâthâs or oldest part of the Zend-Avesta, which contains the leading doctrines of Zoroaster, he asks Ormuzd for truth and guidance, and desires to know what he shall do. He is told to be pure in thought, word and deed; to be temperate, chaste and truthful; to offer prayer to Ormuzd and the powers that fight with him; to destroy all hurtful things (the ancient Persians looked upon ants, snakes and all vermin, as agents of the evil powers); and to do all that will increase the well-being of mankind. Men were not to cringe before the powers of darkness as slaves crouch

before a tyrant, they were to meet them upstanding, and confound them by unending opposition and the power of a holy life.

To such high thoughts, to be sweetened and kept in vigour by pure deeds, did this noble man give utterance, and we may believe that much of truth underlies the sketch which the good Baron Bunsen has drawn of the assembling together of the people at the command of Zoroaster that they might choose between the nature-gods of their fathers and the Lord whom he would have them serve.

Bunsen pictures the assembly as gathered on 'one of the holy hills dedicated to the worship of fire in the neighbourhood of the primeval city of marvels in Central Asia—Bactria, the glorious, now called Balkh.' Thus Zoroaster speaks in the Zend-Avesta:

'Now I shall proclaim to all who have come to listen, the praises of Thee, the all-wise Lord, and the hymns of the good Spirit.

'Hear with your ears what is best, perceive with your mind what is pure, so that every man may for himself choose his tenets before the great doom. May the wise be on our side!

'Those old spirits who are twins, made known what is good and what is evil in thoughts, words and deeds. Those who are good, distinguished between the two, not those who are evil-doers.

'When these two Spirits came together, they made first life and death, so that there should be at last the most wretched life for the bad, but for the good blessedness.

'Of these two Spirits the evil one chose the worst deeds; the kind Spirit, He whose garment is the immovable sky, chose what is right; and they also who faithfully please Ahuramazdâ by good works.

'Let us then be of those who further this world; oh Ahuramazdâ, oh, bliss-conferring Asha! (truth). Let our mind be there where wisdom abides.

'Then indeed there will be the fall of the pernicious Druj (falsehood), but in the beautiful abode of Vohumano (the good spirit), of Mazdâ, and Asha, will be gathered for ever those who dwell in good report.

'Oh men, if you cling to these commandments which Mazdâ has given, which are a torment to the wicked and a blessing to the righteous, then there will be victory through them.'

In this old faith there was a belief in two abodes for the departed; heaven, the 'house of the angels' hymns,' and hell, where the wicked were sent. Between the two there was a bridge, over which the souls of the righteous alone passed in safety; the wicked falling into the dark dwelling-place of Ahriman. There are also traces of

a resurrection and judgment-day, which will be foretold by Sosiosh, son of Zoroaster, who shall come as the Messiah, or Prophet of Ormuzd, to convert the world and slay the arch-fiend Ahriman, or, as another account relates, to purify the earth by fire, consume all evil, and bring forth from the ashes a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness alone shall dwell.

The few rites and ceremonies which Zoroaster imported into his religion were doubtless such as were familiar to the Asiatic Aryans when together, and were mainly the offering of *Homa* and of *fire*. The Persian *Homa* or *Haoma* is the same as the Hindu *Soma*, and hymns to it occur in the Zend-Avesta. Ormuzd being the source of light, has for symbols the sun, moon and planets and also fire, which is regarded as his pure creation, and therefore most sacred of all things upon earth. The offering of fire has continued to the present day, nor is the flame ever suffered to go out. The Zoroastrians had neither temples nor idols, and the fire was kept burning in an enclosed space, the chief rites of worship being performed before it.

The Pârsî still faces some light-giving object, as

the sun or fire, when he offers his prayer, and the priests cover their faces when they approach the flame, lest it be defiled by their breath. It is, however, untrue to speak of the Pârsîs as worshipping fire; they simply regard it as an emblem of divine power and honour it accordingly. Life being the gift of Ormuzd and therefore dear to him, no sacrifice of blood was offered in the early centuries of the religion, but many corruptions have since crept in and overlaid this once purest and noblest of all the creeds of Asia.

Since death was the dark deed of Ahriman, the dead body has ever been looked upon with horror, and as the Pârsîs believed that the evil demons had secured it, it could not be permitted to pollute the pure elements which Ormuzd had created; earth, fire, and water. So it was put on some exposed place; some 'Tower of Silence' where birds of prey devoured the flesh, and the sunlight bleached the bones, which were afterwards buried in the earth; and such is the practice to this day. But the Zoroastrians had a good hope that the demons had not touched the *pure* soul, which

passed away beyond the eastern mountains to the sun-lit paradise of the holy, and there entered into rest.

The history of Persia is full of interest. It was the first among the Aryan nations to rise into importance. Under Cyrus, whose name and deeds are spoken of in the Old Testament, it became a mighty empire, whose boundary stretched from the Indus to Asia Minor, and it was during his reign that the Jews were freed from their captivity at Babylon, and returned to Palestine. Darius, Xerxes (the Ahasuerus of Scripture), these are names well known to us, and under them and other kings Persia remained powerful for centuries until it was conquered by the Arabs, when the old Zoroastrian faith gave place to Mohammadanism. Professor Max Müller remarks: 'There were periods in the history of the world when the worship of Ormuzd threatened to rise triumphant on the ruins of the temples of all other gods. If the battles of Marathon and Salamis had been lost and Greece had succumbed to Persia, the state religion of the empire of Cyrus, which was the worship of

Ormuzd, might have become the religion of the whole civilized world.'

But this was not to be; and there now remain in Asia only a few hundred thousand Pârsîs, some of whom dwell in the old land, while the greater number have settled in and around Bombay.

Their creed is of the simplest kind; it is to fear God, to live a life of pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds, and to die in the hope of a world to come. It is the creed of those who have lived nearest to God and served Him faithfullest in every age, and wherever they dwell who accept it and practise it, they bear witness to that which makes them children of God and brethren of the prophets, among whom Zoroaster was not the least.

The Jews were carried away as captives to Babylon some 600 years before Christ, and during the seventy years of their exile there, they came into contact with the Persian religion, and derived from it ideas about the immortality of the soul which their own religion did not contain. They also borrowed from it their belief in a multitude of angels, and in Satan as the ruler over evil

spirits. The ease with which man believes in unearthly powers working for his hurt prepares a people to admit into its creed the doctrine of evil spirits, and although it is certain that the Jews had no belief in such spirits before their captivity in Babylon, they spoke of Satan (which means *an adversary*) as a messenger sent from God to watch the deeds of men and accuse them to Him for their wrong-doing. Satan thus becoming by degrees an object of dread, upon whom all the evil which befel men was charged, the minds of the Jews were ripe for accepting the Persian doctrine of Ahriman with his legions of devils. Ahriman became the Jewish Satan, a belief in whom formed part of early Christian doctrine, and is now but slowly dying out. What fearful ills it has caused, history has many a page to tell. The doctrine that Satan, once an angel of light, had been cast from heaven for rebellion against God, and had ever since played havoc among mankind, gave rise to the belief that he and his demons could possess the souls of men and animals at pleasure. Hence grew the belief in wizards and witches, under which millions of creatures, both

young and old, were cruelly tortured and put to death.

We turn over the smeared pages of this history in haste, thankful that from such a nightmare the world has wakened, and assured that God tempts us not, neither devil nor wicked angel, but that, as Jesus said, '*out of the heart*' proceed evil thoughts and all that doth defile. (See on this matter 'Childhood of the World,' pp. 92-94.)

CHAPTER X.

BUDDHISM.

ALTHOUGH Buddhism, which numbers more followers than any other faith, is hundreds of years younger than the old Hindu religion, we know less about it. We miss in it the gladness which bursts forth in the hymns of the Veda, and to turn from them to it is like reading the sad thoughts in the Book of Ecclesiastes after the cheerful songs of praise in the Book of Psalms. But if clouds and darkness are round about it, and our learned men differ as to what much of it really means, this should not surprise us, since a knowledge of it has come to hand only within the last few years. Even Christians are split up into many sects, because they cannot agree as to the exact meaning of many parts of Scripture, although the loving research of centuries has been given to find it out.

We saw at page 158 how the Brahmans had

coiled their rules round men's souls and bodies, and placed upon them burdens grievous to be borne, without in any way satisfying the cravings of the human spirit. It was against all this that Buddhism revolted, just as in the reign of Henry VIII., the people of England and Germany threw off the shackles of Rome, and made possible the freedom which we now enjoy.

The founder of Buddhism was of princely birth. He was born 628 years before Christ, in Kapila-vastu, the royal city of his father, who was ruler of a kingdom north of Oude, in India. He was called *Gautama*, from the tribe to which his family belonged; *Sâkya-Muni*, or 'the monk of the race of Sâkya;' *Siddârtha*, a name given him by his father, and meaning 'He in whom wishes are fulfilled;' and in later years *Buddha*, or more correctly, *the Buddha*; the enlightened; from the root *budh*, to know. (For legends of his birth, see Note H.)

His mother, to whom the future greatness and mighty sway of her boy over men's hearts were made known in a dream, died a few days after his birth. He grew up a beautiful and clever boy,

and 'never felt so happy as when he could sit alone lost in thought in the deep shadows of the forest,' although, as he proved when a young man, no unskilled foe to meet in tournament or war. So sad and serious did he become, that his father feared he would grow up a mere dreamer, and, with the view of calling him to an active life, chose a lovely princess to become his wife. He lived happily with her, but was still given to much thought about life and death. Prof. Max Müller tells us that he used to say, 'Nothing on earth is stable, nothing is real. Life is as transitory as a spark of fire, or the sound of a lyre. There must be some supreme intelligence where we could find rest. If I attained it I could bring light to men; if I were free myself, I could deliver the world.' His friends tried to divert his thoughts from these matters by gay scenes and courtly splendours, but it was in vain. At this time he met three sights which deepened his sadness, for they told him what awaited him. These were a feeble old man; a fever-sick and mud-stained man; and a dead body. Afterwards he met a devotee, and resolved, like him, to

retire from the world, and thereby, as he vainly thought, escape all that in it is unreal and sad. One night, as he lay upon his couch, a crowd of dancing girls came and displayed their charms before him, but in vain; and when sleep fell upon him, they, weary and vexed, ceased their dancing, and were soon asleep also. Gautama woke at midnight to find them lying around him; and seeing some tossing heavily, some open-mouthed, and others coiled up, it seemed to him as if nought but loathsome bodies filled his splendid apartment, and that all was vanity. That moment he resolved to leave his palace, and while his servant was saddling the fleetest of his horses, he gently opened the room where his wife was sleeping that he might see his child. The mother had one of her hands over its head, and fearing to waken them, he resolved to go, and not look upon his boy till he had become the Buddha. One legend says that he had scarcely crossed the threshold when the tempter met him and sought to thwart his purpose by promising him rule over all the kingdoms of this world; but Gautama would not yield, yet from that day the tempter ceased

not to attack the holy man. He went among the Brahmans to see if their teaching would lighten his burden ; he did what they told him, performed their rites and ceremonies, but these brought him no peace. He left them and retired to a small village, where, after practising the most severe rites, the repute of his sanctity brought to him five disciples, with whom he remained six years. Seeing that such a life led not to perfection, but was useless and selfish, giving nothing and taking all, he returned to more cheerful ways, and, still pursuing his thinking, had his reward. As he sat one day beneath a tree, a great joy came to him, for knowledge burst in upon him by which he became Buddha, the man who knew.

While fasting under the tree during the sacred period of seven times seven days and nights the demon of wickedness attacked him a second time, even using force, but was defeated by the power of the ten great virtues of Buddha, the weapons of the evil one and of his soldiers being changed into beautiful flowers as they fell upon Buddha, and the rocks becoming nosegays as they were hurled at him ; whereupon the spirits who had watched

over his birth and who now followed his life on earth rent the air with shouts of joy at his victory. Afterwards the tempter sent his three daughters, one a winning girl; one a blooming virgin; and one a middle-aged beauty, to allure him, but they could not. Buddha was proof against all the demon's arts, and his only trouble was whether it were well or not to preach his doctrines to men. Feeling how hard to gain was that which he had gained, and how enslaved men were by their passions so that they might neither listen to him nor understand him, he had well nigh resolved to be silent, but at the last deep compassion for all beings made him resolve to tell his secret to mankind that they too might be free, and he thus became the founder of the most popular religion of ancient or modern times. The spot where Buddha obtained his knowledge became one of the most sacred places in India. He first preached at Benares, or, as they say, 'turned the wheel of the law,' a phrase which may have given rise to the wheels on which some of his words are inscribed and which are set in motion by wind or water. He met with great opposition from the

Brahmans, but kept on his way, converting the high and the low until in his eighty-fifth year he died peacefully while sitting under a tree. His remains were burnt amidst great pomp and quarrels arose for the possession of the fragments. They were at last divided into eight portions, over each of which a *tope* (a Hindu word for a bell-shaped building raised over relics) was built. Of course the usual legends teeming with stories of wonderful miracles grew around his memory, and this notwithstanding that he told his disciples the only true wonder was to 'hide their good deeds and confess before men their sins.' The myths and traditions of the Buddhists about the universe and the things therein are absurd in the extreme.

Very soon after his death a general council of his disciples was held to fix the doctrines and rules of the religion. Buddha had written nothing himself, and the council is said to have chosen from his followers those who remembered most of his teaching. It is interesting to note that among these were two men, one of deep earnestness and zeal; the other of most sweet nature, loving Buddha much and most beloved by him; remind-

ing us of two of Christ's disciples, Peter and John.

Two other councils were afterwards held for the correction of errors that had crept into the faith, and for sending missionaries into other lands. The last of these councils is said to have been held 251 years before Christ, so that long before Christianity was founded we have this great religion with its sacred traditions of Buddha's words, its councils and its missions, besides, as we shall presently see, many things strangely like the rites of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Buddhist scriptures are called the 'Tripitaka,'* or 'three baskets,' being in three parts. The first 'pitaka' contains rules of discipline; the second, the discourses of Buddha; and the third treats of philosophy and the subtle doctrines of the religion. The words of Buddha, handed on from age to age and preserved in the memories of men, were at last set down in writing. They grew, as our Scriptures have grown, much entering into them which Buddha never said, but all the writings at

* See Note I.

last received as the sacred records of his teaching and religion.

Among the traditions concerning Buddha, there is one which tells of a young mother whose child died and whose dead body, in her great love and sorrow, she clasped to her bosom, and went about from house to house asking if any one would give her some medicine for it. The neighbours thought her mad, but a wise man, seeing that she could not or would not understand the law of death, said to her, 'My good girl, I cannot myself give medicine for it, but I know of a doctor who can attend to it.' She asked who it was, and was sent by the wise man to Buddha. After doing homage to him, she said, 'Lord and master, do you know any medicine that will be good for my boy?' Buddha replied that he did, and told her to fetch a handful of mustard seed which must be taken from a house where no son, husband, parent, or slave had died. Then the woman went in search, but no such house could she find, for whenever she asked if there had died any of those, the answer came from one, 'I have lost a son;' from another, 'I have lost my parents;' and from all,

'Lady, the living are few, but the dead are many.' At last, not finding any house where death had not been, the truth broke in upon her, and leaving the dead body of her boy in a forest, she returned to Buddha, and told her tale. He said to her, 'You thought that you alone had lost a son; the law of death is that among all living creatures there is nothing that abides,' and when he had finished preaching the law, the woman became his disciple.

Once upon a time Buddha lived in a village, and in the sowing season, went with his bowl in hand to the place where food was being given by a Brahman, who seeing him, spoke thus:

'O priest, I both plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, I eat; you also, O priest, should plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, you should eat.'

'I too, O Brahman, plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, I eat,' said Buddha.

'But we see neither the yoke, nor plough, nor ploughshare, nor goad, nor oxen, of the venerable Gautama. . . .

'Being questioned by us as to your ploughing, speak in such a manner as we may know of your ploughing.'

The Buddha replied: 'For my cultivation, faith is the seed; penance the rain; wisdom my yoke and plough; modesty the shaft for the plough; mind the string; presence-of mind my ploughshare and goad.'

Then the Brahman offered him rice boiled in milk from a golden vessel.

In a chapter very popular among the Buddhists of Ceylon, the demon Álavaka is said to have asked Buddha, 'What is the best wealth to a man in this world? What thing well done produces happiness? Of savoury things, which is indeed the most savoury? The life of one who lives in what manner, do they say, is the best?'

Buddha answered: 'Faith is the best wealth to a man here. The observing well the law produces happiness. Truth is indeed the most savoury of all savoury things. The living endowed with wisdom, they say, is the best of all modes of living.'

On another occasion, when asked what was the greatest blessing, Buddha said:

'The succouring of mother and father, the cherishing of child and wife, and the following of a lawful calling, this is the greatest blessing.

'The giving alms, a religious life, aid rendered to relations, blameless acts, this is the greatest blessing.

'The abstaining from sins and the avoiding them, the eschewing of intoxicating drink, diligence in good deeds, reverence and humility, contentment and gratefulness, this is the greatest blessing.

. . . 'Those who having done these things, become invincible on all sides, attain happiness on all sides. This is the greatest blessing.'

There is a discourse of Buddha's which some have called, from the place where it was preached, his 'sermon on the mount,' but it lacks clearness, nor could it be set down in language easy to grasp. The extracts from Buddhist sacred books just given show how forcefully Buddha could put much meaning into few words, and of this there is rich proof in a book called the 'Dhammapada,' or 'Path of Virtue,' which is believed to contain his sayings. For example:

'He who lives looking for pleasures only, his senses uncontrolled, idle and weak, Mâra (the tempter) will certainly overcome him, as the wind throws down a weak tree.'

'Let the wise man guard his thoughts, they are difficult to perceive, very artful, and they rush wherever they list; thoughts well guarded bring happiness.'

'As the bee collects nectar, and departs without injuring the flower, or its colour and scent, so let the sage dwell on earth.'

'Like a beautiful flower, full of colour but without scent, are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly. But like a beautiful flower, full of colour and full of scent, are the fine and fruitful words of him who acts accordingly.'

'He who lives a hundred years, vicious and unrestrained, a life of one day is better if a man is virtuous and reflecting.

'Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come near unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled; the fool becomes full of evil even if he gathers it little by little.'

'Not to commit any sin, to do good, and to purify one's mind, that is the teaching of the Awakened.' (This is one of the most solemn verses among the Buddhists).

'Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us! Let us dwell free from hatred among men who hate!

'Let us live happily then, free from greed among the greedy! Let us dwell free from greed among men who are greedy!

'Let us live happily then, though we call nothing our own! We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness!'

Buddhism became the state religion of India in the reign of King Asoka, (who ascended the throne about 268 years before Christ), and continued so for nearly nine centuries, until, from causes by no means clear, it was driven therefrom, and has since found its followers mainly among those great races of Asia which are neither Aryan nor Semitic, but which may be roughly classed as Mongol. It is one of the three State religions of China; it is the religion of Tibet, and spreads

northwards to the confines of Swedish Lapland and southwards into Burmah, embracing nearly the whole of Eastern Asia, including Japan, in which island it is, however, not the state religion. The island of Ceylon supplies us with much of our knowledge about Buddha, and is rich in Buddhist architecture, cave-temples, shrines, ruined cities and relics, chiefest among which are a so-called tooth of Buddha, and a famous tree, nearly 2200 years old, which is a branch of the tree under which he sat when he became the Enlightened. Buddhism as a great *religion* is a very different thing from Buddhism as a *philosophy*, and its marvellous success was surely not owing to Buddha's dreamy speculations about the misery of life, and to his teaching as to the best way of escape therefrom.

We saw that he strove to find in this world of unrest something that was lasting, the knowledg of which might release him from change and decay. Now the great doctrines of the deeper part of his religion are given in what he called 'the four sublime truths.'

They assert that there is pain ; that pain comes

through the desire or passion for things that cannot be ours for long; that both the pain and the desire can be ended by Nirvâna, to which in the fourth truth Buddha shows the right way. Some think that by this Buddha meant *Nothingness*, ceasing to be, the soul being 'blown out' like the flame of a candle; others that he meant the attainment of perfect peace.

The four paths to this way are as follows:

He has entered the *first* path who sees the evils arising from separate existence, and who believes in Buddha and in the power of his system alone to obtain salvation, that is, deliverance from separate existence.

He has entered the *second* path who, besides the above, is free from lust and evil to others.

He has entered the *third* path who is further free from all kinds of evil desires, from ignorance, doubt, wrong belief and hatred; while

He has entered the *fourth* path who is entirely free from sin ('has cast it away as if it were a burden'), and passions, by which are meant the lust of the flesh, the love of existence, and the defilements of wrong-belief and ignorance.

The four paths have also been summed up in

eight steps or divisions: right views, right thoughts, right speech, right actions, right living, right exertion, right recollection, right meditation.

After these doctrines there follow ten commandments, of which the first five apply to all people, and the rest chiefly to such as set themselves apart for a religious life. They are, not to kill; not to steal; not to commit adultery; not to lie; not to get drunk; to abstain from late meals; from public amusements; from expensive dress; from large beds; and to accept neither gold nor silver.

It is easy to see that the more difficult part of Buddha's teaching, which was largely caused by the love common to Hindus for knotty questions, and by his study of the systems of the Brahmans, might give rise to endless speculations among the learned few, but would never move or draw to itself the unlearned masses of men.

The success of Buddhism was in this: It was a protest against the powers of the priests; it to a large degree broke down caste by declaring that all men were equal, and by allowing any one desiring to live a holy life to become a priest.

'Not from birth,' said Buddha, 'does one become a Vasala (slave), not from birth does one become a Brahman. By bad conduct does one become a Vasala, by good conduct does one become a Brahman.' It abolished sacrifices; made it the duty of all men to honour their parents and care for their children, to be kind to the sick and poor and sorrowing, to forgive their enemies and return good for evil; it spread a spirit of charity abroad which encompassed the lowest life as well as the highest, bidding men

> 'Never to blend their pleasure or their pride
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that lives.'

This was why the common people heard it gladly. They could not soar into the upper clouds, but needed some faith and hope by which to do the hard work of life; and when life was over, they looked for a paradise where they would be delivered from care and suffering. Towards such the millions of Buddhists look this day, for

> 'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath
> Has ever truly longed for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that we want.'

The teaching of Buddha, like that of Christ, has been changed and overlaid with doctrines foreign to it by the nations who have accepted it, and the forms of worship adopted by Buddhists vary in the different countries, but consist mainly in adoration of the statues of Buddha and of his relics, he being, in their view, that which any man may become by practice of the four sublime truths and the commandments. In Buddhism as a *philosophy* the being of God is not denied; it is ignored, nothing is said about it: as a *religion*, its millions of followers believe in many gods. We have seen how closely the teaching of Buddha's law of mercy and charity is like to that of Christ's being in short the fruit of the loving nature of each of these holy men; and another feature, hinted at above, is the likeness between certain rites of Buddhism and Christianity. When the Roman Catholic missionaries first met the Buddhist monks they were shocked when they saw that their heads were shaven, that they knelt before

images, that they worshipped relics, wore strings of beads, used bells and holy water, and had confession of sin. They believed that the devil, as the father of all mischief and deceit, had tempted these men to dress themselves in the clothes of Catholics and mock their solemn practices; whereas it seems likely that if there had been any connection in the past, the younger religion had borrowed from the older.

Of the strange mode by which the Tibetans, on the death of the Grand Lama, who is their high priest, and regarded as infallible, like the Pope, elect his successor, into whom they believe his soul passes, space forbids an account. Monasteries for men and nunneries for women still exist, and especially in Tibet, vast numbers of monks are found; while the huge and now deserted monasteries and temples cut in the solid rock, and of which hundreds exist in India, show how mightily a system, which had been thought to belong to Christianity only, had formed part of Buddhism two thousand years ago.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RELIGIONS OF CHINA.

ALTHOUGH we are still in the East, we leave its gorgeous dazzlements behind, and once within the walls of China come amongst scenes where song gives place to prose and golden romance to sober fact; where the people's faces, their houses, their junks and their hand-writing, seem made after one pattern.

On the soil of this country there is crowded nearly one-third of the human race. The manners and customs of the Chinese are those of their ancestors hundreds of years ago. Empires have risen and fallen around them, but they remain the same, nor have the invaders that broke through their Great Wall and forced rulers upon them altered their laws or their language. The mariner's compass; printing; gunpowder and other arts, were known to them long before they were in use in Europe. Theirs is a land where every-

thing seems topsy-turvy. The soldiers wear petticoats, use fans and fight the enemy at night with lanterns; the people have fireworks by daylight; white is the colour used in mourning; boats are drawn by men and carriages are moved by sails; while visiting cards are four feet long and painted red! In the high honour paid to learning the Chinese teach us a lesson. The lowest among them can rise to the highest offices in the state, these being given, not to the best-born, but to those who have passed with the greatest merit the public examinations; so that knowledge is the road to power.

The ancient inhabitants of China, like the races with whom they are thought to be allied, were worshippers of the powers of nature and of the spirits of their ancestors, and these still largely enter into the religions of China. There is a State worship kept up by the Emperor and his court, in which sacrifices are offered to the heaven and earth, to the spirits of sages, rulers and learned men; also of mountains, fields and rivers; while each household has its family spirits to whom honour and reverence are paid. And behind

all this there looms a supreme power, lord of the sky, 'ancestor of all things,' who is however as vague a being to the Chinese as Brahm is to the Hindus.

China has three national religions; Buddhism, which was admitted as a religion of the State 65 years after Christ, the Chinese name of Buddha being Fo; Taoism; and Confucianism.

The three religions are often professed by the same person, and there is none of that bitter feeling between the believers in different creeds which exists so much among Christians, Muslims and others. This is, however, owing to the lack of earnestness; for they who feel deeply concerning what they believe cannot be careless regarding what they think are the errors of others.

Lao-tse, the founder of Taoism, lived between 500 and 600 years before Christ, and was an altogether different man from Confucius. He was a thinker, not a worker, seeking to unravel those same problems which perplexed Buddha, and what there is in the Chinese belief of a spiritual kind may have been aided by the teaching of Lao-tse. Confucius is said to have visited him

and confessed that he could not understand him. Taoism has become mixed up with magic, with worship of spirits, of stars, mountains, and rivers, its priests are for the most part ignorant men, and the cultivated Chinese regard it with contempt.

Their great teacher and lawgiver, whose 'writings and life have given the law to Chinese thought,' is K'ung-Foo-Tse, 'the master K'ung,' whose name has been Latinized into Confucius. He is their patron saint; his descendants are held in special honour; the most famous temple in the empire is built over his grave, while hundreds of other temples to his memory abound, and thousands of animals are sacrificed on the two yearly festivals sacred to that memory. Each one of the thousands who compete in the great examinations must know the whole system of Confucius and commit his doctrines to heart.

This man, who was reviled in life, but whose influence sways the hundreds of millions of China, was born 551 years before Christ, not far from the time when Cyrus became king of Persia and the Jews returned from Babylon, and a few years before the death of Buddha. He lost his

father, who was an old man and an officer of state in the kingdom of Loo, now a Chinese province, when he was three years old; but his mother trained him with tender care, and he is said to have shown from an early age great love for learning and for the laws and lore of his country. At the time when Confucius lived, China was divided into a number of petty kingdoms whose rulers were ever quarrelling, and although he became engaged in various public situations of trust, the disorder of the state at last caused him to resign them, and he retired to another part of the country. He then continued the life of a public teacher, instructing men in the simple moral truths by which he sought to govern his own life. The purity of that life, and the example of veneration for the old laws which he set, gathered round him many grave and thoughtful men, who worked with him for the common good. He afterwards returned to Loo, and remaining for some years without office, became in his 50th year a minister of state, and great success attended his wise rule; but at last the wild excesses of the court upturned his good laws,

and he had to resign his place. Poverty and other ills came upon him, few heeded his words of wisdom, and after many wanderings, he returned to his native land a despised and poor man. He spent the remainder of his life in editing the sacred books of China, and in writing some additions to them, and passed away in the seventy-third year of his age.

His system would scarcely be called a religion, and yet that is the best name for it, because it teaches men how to live. Four things he is said to have taught: learning, morals, devotion of soul and reverence. He counselled all to be sincere, just, loving, careful of duty to themselves and others, and observant of ancient laws and rites. He had nothing to say about God or another life. Here and there he speaks in vague words of 'heaven,' a power whose emblem is the sky, but not as of one to whom praises should ascend, and towards whom the love of children should be felt. This was not because Confucius was an unbeliever, for he, of all men, had reverence for the sacred, unknown power that underlies all things. but because his nature was so beauti-

fully simple and sincere that he would not pretend to knowledge of that which he felt was beyond human reach and thought. This was shown in his reply to a disciple who asked him concerning death. 'While you do not know life, how can you know about death?'

His life was given to teaching a few great truths, obedience to which he believed would bring happiness to man. He says of himself: 'At fifteen years, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of heaven. At sixty, everything I heard I easily understood. At seventy, the desires of my heart no longer transgressed the law.'

The sacred books of China are called the *Kings*,* and are five in number, containing treatises on morals, books of rites, poems and history. They are of great age, perhaps as old as the earliest hymns of the Rig-Veda, and are free from any impure thoughts. *King* means the warp threads of a web. The name is given as showing

* See Note K.

that which is woven together; like the use of our word *text*, which comes from the Latin *textum*, 'that which is woven.'

These books, which were deeply studied by Confucius, teach that there is one Supreme Being, everywhere present, all-seeing, who commands right deeds, pure thoughts and watchfulness over the tongue. 'For a blemish may be taken out of a diamond by carefully polishing it; but if your words have the least blemish, there is no way to efface that.' 'Heaven penetrates to the bottom of our hearts, like light into a dark chamber. We must conform ourselves to it until we are like two instruments of music tuned to the same pitch. Our passions shut up the door of our souls against God.'

Such are among the wise words of these most ancient books, restored by Confucius to their rightful place. I should like ample space to quote many of his own pithy sayings, which are given in the first of the four *Shoo*, meaning *writings* or *books*, compiled by his disciples, but a few must suffice.

'The Master said, "Shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to hold that you know it, and when

you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it; this is knowledge."'

'To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage.'

'Worship as though the Deity were present.'

'He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray.'

'If my mind is not engaged in my worship, it is as though I worshipped not.'

'Coarse rice for food, water to drink, the bended arm for a pillow,—happiness may be enjoyed even with these; but without virtue, both riches and honour seem to me like the passing cloud.'

'Grieve not that men know not you; grieve that you know not men.'

'A good man is serene; a bad man always in fear.'

'There may be fair words and an humble countenance when there is little virtue.'

'One of his disciples said,' "If you, Master, do not speak, what shall we, your disciples, have to read?" The Master said, "Does Heaven speak? The four seasons pursue their courses, and all things are continually being produced; but does Heaven say anything?"'

'In the Book of Poetry are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in that one sentence, "Have no depraved thoughts."' (This reminds us of the saying of the later Jewish Rabbis that all the 613 precepts of the Law were summed up in the words, 'The just shall live by his faith.')

'If a man in the morning hear the right way, he may die in the evening without regret.'

'Tsze-kung said, "What I do not wish men to do to me,

I also wish not to do to men." The Master said, "You have not attained to that."'

Such is the power of words, that those uttered by this intensely earnest man, whose work was ended only by death, have kept alive throughout the vast empire of China a reverence for the past and a sense of duty to the present which have made the Chinese the most orderly and moral people in the world. But to 'the mighty hopes that make us men,' they are strangers. Theirs is a dull, plodding life, and one can hardly say of them what Pope wrote of the Indian:

> 'To be, contents his natural desire,
> He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire,'

for their hold on life is slender, and it is a great matter with them to have their coffins ready. They, however, speak of the dead as 'ascended to the sky,' and have a great horror of being beheaded, in the belief that there can be no hereafter for a headless trunk.

It is only of late years, although not by the best means, that parts of their vast empire have

been entered by foreigners, removing for ever the ancient barriers against Western ideas and civilization, and thus aiding in making the world more and more one country.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SEMITIC NATIONS.

ALL that has been said about the common descent of the Aryan or Indo-European nations applies to the Semitic nations. Their languages are shown to be even more closely related than the Aryan languages and afford clear proof of a time when the ancestors of the Semitic peoples lived together, speaking the same tongue and worshipping the same gods. When further research is made we may look for as vivid a picture of old Semitic life as that which we have of old Aryan manners and customs.

Under the name *Semitic* or *Shemitic*, meaning people descended from Shem, one of the sons of Noah (a term which by no means truly describes them), there are included the Jews and other Syrian tribes, the Arabs, Assyrians, Babylonians, Phœnicians and Carthaginians. Of the home from which the old Semitic races migrated we cannot speak with certainty; it may have been in

the country watered by the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, or in some part of Arabia.

These nations have filled an important place in human history, but they have never spread themselves over the earth as have the Aryans. They have been great in religion, in science and in commerce, the cities which they founded, Jerusalem, Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and their settlements in Carthage and Spain, reminding us what a splendid and deathless story their records tell.

In the ancient worship of the Semitic races before they separated, there are clear traces that the names of their chief gods had been fixed.

These names mostly express moral qualities; that is, instead of a god of fire, or storm, or sky, we have the Strong, the Exalted, the Lord, the King, etc. One of the highest and oldest names was *El*, meaning strong. 'It occurs in the Babylonian inscriptions as *Ilu*, God, and in the very name of *Bab-il*, the gate or temple of *Il*. We have it in *Beth-el*, the house of God, and in many other names. The same *El* was worshipped at Byblus by the Phœnicians and was called there 'the son of heaven and earth.' *Eloah* is the same word as the

Arabic *Ilâh*, God ; *Ilâh*, without the article, means a god in general ; with the article *Al-Ilâh* or *Allâh*, it becomes the name of the God of Mohammad, as it was the name of the God of Abraham and of Moses.' Another famous name is *Baal* or *Bel, the lord.* He was not only a supreme god among the Assyrians, Babylonians and Phœnicians, but was a frequent object of worship by the Jews.

Then we have the Hebrew *Melech*, king, which is the *Moloch* of the Phœnicians, to whom children were sacrificed by their own parents, a horrible practice which they carried with them to Carthage and other places.

These and other names were common to the undivided Semitic people, but it is thought that the name *Jah, Jahveh* or *Jehovah*, was used by the Jews only. Be this as it may, 'Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic point to a common source as much as Sanskrit, Greek and Latin.'

But the ancient history of the mighty empires of the East does not form part of my subject, and, moreover, the history of the Jewish race and religion is given in my book entitled 'Jesus of Nazareth.'

We must ever feel the deepest interest in the Jews, because while Aryan blood flows in our veins, our Christian religion has come from a Semitic race. The long line of noble men to whom the Jewish nation has given birth from the time of its founder Abraham to the age when Jesus Christ and his apostles lived; the fearless witness which since the days of its captivity it has borne to the lofty belief that 'there is One God and none other but He,' must ever give to its scattered people a large place in our veneration and our love. Only it must be no blind, but a pure and true veneration, born of careful study of all that they have been and of all that they have done. We must treat their history as we treat other histories, since it tells the same story of slow advance from barbarous to civilized modes of life, and from coarse and rude ideas about the gods to the purer ideas of cultured peoples.

Of the Semitic religions those that concern us in the present day are only the Jewish and the Mohammadan, of which latter some account will now follow.

CHAPTER XIII.

MOHAMMADANISM, OR ISLÁM.

THIS religion, which is the guide in life and the support in death of one hundred and fifty millions of our fellow creatures; which, like Christianity, has its missionaries scattered over the globe, and offers itself as a faith needed by all men; which for hundreds of years has had firm hold upon the sacred places of Palestine so dear to Jew and Christian, is worth careful study. *Islám*, which is its correct name, comes from a word meaning in the first instance 'to be at rest, to have done one's duty, to be at perfect peace,' and is commonly held to mean 'submission to the will and commandments of God.'

Muslim, the name given to its believers (spelt also Moslem, Muslem, &c.), comes from *Islám*, and means 'a righteous man.'

While we know very little about the lives of the founders of some religions already sketched,

and that little so mixed up with fable and legend as to make it hard work to sift the false from the true, nearly all the facts of Mohammad's life are well known to us, and are supported by the witness of thousands who knew him for many years.

And the value of Islám, the youngest of the great religions, is, that we are able to see how its first simple form became overlaid with legend and foolish superstition, and thus learn how, in like manner, myth and fable have grown around more ancient religions.

For example: although Mohammad came into the world like other children, wonderful things were said to have taken place at his birth; one legend being that angels took him from the arms of his nurse, drew his heart from his bosom, and then squeezed from it the black drop of sin which is in every child of Adam.

He never claimed to be a perfect man; he did not pretend to foretell events or to work miracles. He said, 'My miracle is the Korân, which shall remain for ever,' and he pointed to those great signs in heaven and earth, greater than the

wonders said to have been wrought by men,—the sun, and moon, and stars; the day and the night; the mountains which keep the earth steady (an old Arab notion); the water that slakes man's thirst and the cattle which change the grass into milk, as parts of one great, never-ceasing miracle.

In spite of all this, his followers said of him, while he was yet living, that he worked wonders, and they believed the golden vision, hinted at in the Korân (concerning which Mohammadan tradition tells how, clothed in robe and turban of light, he rode by night upon the lightning to Jerusalem, and then ascending to heaven, passed through the dwellings of the prophets into the presence of the Unseen, where stillness was, and nothing heard, 'except the silent sound of the reed wherewith the decrees of God are written on the tablets of fate'), to have been a real event, although Mohammad said over and over again that it was but a dream. When he died, the people would not believe it; the places where he had trod became to them the holiest spots on earth, and the words which he had spoken, the very words of God. Thus it has been with other

prophets and saintly men. They have been too great for smaller men to understand, have towered too high for them to measure, and when they have passed away, have been looked upon as gods that 'have come down in the likeness of men.'

Mohammad has suffered much both from friend and foe. The former, who asked him to do something to prove his high mission, as the Jews asked Jesus for a sign, willingly believed anything they were told of him; the latter thought that nothing too vile or bad could be said of him. A story was invented that he had trained a dove to pick peas from his ear, so that it might be taken for an angel bringing him messages from God! Martin Luther called him 'a horrid devil,' and to this day most Christians believe that he was a shameless impostor. Mohammad was a man, and therefore not free from sin. Although that sin stained the later years of his life, he was no cheat or false prophet, but from the day when his strong soul burst the bonds of forty years' silence, a preacher of the eternal truth; 'La Ellâh Ellâla,' 'There is no god but God.'

'By their fruits ye shall know them.' A

religion which has fed the heart-hunger of millions of men for nigh 1300 years cannot have been cradled in fraud. It did not grow without a struggle, for if stones and sneers could have killed it, it would have died during Mohammad's life-time.

Mohammad was born at Mekkeh, or, as it is usually spelt, Mecca, in Arabia, 571 years after Christ. His father, who died before his son's birth, was poor, but of a noble tribe, the Koreish, who were guardians of the sacred stone of the Kaaba. Mohammad lost his mother when he was six years old, and was left to the care of relatives. He was a sickly boy, subject to fits, which troubled him in after years; but he had to begin work, tending flocks, at an early age. He was of a nature given to silence and fondness for being alone, caring to have for company only his own thoughts and nature. The grim, lonely desert, and the stars, that shine their brightest in the East, fed his sense of wonder and opened the ear of his soul to any voice that spake the meaning of all that he saw. He could neither read nor write, and so the more used eye and ear, gathering much

knowledge of men and things from journeys with his uncle into Syria. Although sweet-natured, faithful and truthful, he was, perhaps owing to the fits which distressed him, often cast down and gloomy; but in his bright moods he would enter with zest into the glad, free life of children, play with them, and tell them the gorgeous tales of which the East has so rich a store. He lived a most simple life; his dress and food were of the plainest; he mended his own clothes; waited upon himself; and was ever ready to share his meal with the poor. When he was twenty-four years old, he entered the service of a rich widow, who afterwards became his wife and bore him children.

Now we come to the great event of his life. As he neared middle age, his gloom deepened, and he more and more fled from men. It had been his custom for years to spend in prayer and meditation the sacred month during which the Arab tribes laid down their weapons, and in his fortieth year he retired to a small cave on Mount Hira, a huge barren rock standing by itself in the desert, some three miles from Mecca.

Dreams and visions, strange sights and sounds.

as he—in common with epileptic natures—believed, came to him there, and one night a voice called, 'Cry, in the name of thy Lord,' and bade him spread the true religion among men by writing.

'Such light,' says Carlyle in his 'Lectures on Heroes and Hero-Worship,' 'had come, as it could, to illumine the darkness of this wild Arab soul. A confused, dazzling splendour, as of life and heaven, in the great darkness which threatened to be death: he called it revelation and the angel Gabriel;' a revelation 'he was bound to make known to all creatures.' He went home tremblingly and told his wife, the good Kadijah, who at once hailed him as the prophet of the nation.

The Arabs are to-day what they were hundreds of years ago; lovers of freedom, temperate, good-hearted; but withal crafty, revengeful, dishonest. They are very fond of music and poetry, and the rise of a poet in any tribe is a matter for great rejoicing. Not much is known about their religion in the days of 'Ignorance,' as they call the time before Islám, for until Mohammad came their history is almost a blank. They believed in many

gods and worshipped sun, moon, trees and stones, the most famous among the last being the Black stone of the Kaaba, round which 365 idols were placed. This stone, which travellers tell us is an aerolite (or *air-stone*, as the word means, which has fallen from space upon the earth), is said to have been one of the precious stones of Paradise and to have dropped to the earth with Adam; once white, it has become black through the kisses of sinful men or through the silent tears which it has shed for their sins. Arab legend also tells that the building which encloses it was erected by Abraham and Ishmael. To the place where it stands the Muslims all over the world turn five times every day in prayer to God.

Some of the Arab tribes had strange notions about a future state. They would tie a camel to a man's tomb and leave it without food. If it got away the man was lost for ever; but if not, he would find it there at the day of judgment and could mount on it to Paradise.

There had been early settlements of Jews among the Arabs, which some writers think became shrines and sacred places of Islám. At the time when

Mohammad appeared, there were also dotted here and there societies of Jews and Christian sects who had sought refuge in the pathless desert from the cruel power of Rome. But the Christians who had come thither wasted their strength in vain and foolish wrangling. The soul of Christianity, the pure, sweet spirit which they might have kept by learning of Christ, had fled from their midst, and they were quarrelling with each other about the structure of the dead and worthless body in which that soul had dwelt. Still earlier than any of these there had come sun-worshippers from Chaldea and Zoroastrians from Persia.

From this we may gather what strangely varied beliefs found a home in Arabia, and also see how the many Jewish and Christian ideas became mingled with Islám.

There had risen before Mohammad men who preached against the old pagan creeds, but they were only forerunners of this mightier prophet who was nursing his soul in secret, who

'Yet should bring some worthy thing for waiting souls to see,
Some sacred word that he had heard their light and life to be.

Mohammad did not claim to preach a new faith, but the 'religion of Abraham,' whom he said 'was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but pious and righteous and no idolater,' and whom he places among the six chief prophets chosen by God to make known His truth. Mohammad said that these were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and himself. He made known an Almighty and Allwise God, Who had spoken through these prophets, and to the lasting honour of Mohammad he spake no slighting word of those who came before him. Although his knowledge of Christ was obtained from some childish and false gospels which have long since been treated by Christians as worthless, and although he knew nothing of Christ's holy life and beautiful teaching as given in the Four Gospels, he paid him great honour and believed that he worked miracles.

Muslims have not treated Christ as we have treated Mohammad, for the devout among them never utter his name without adding the touching words, 'on whom be peace,' and in the great mosque at El Medíneh or Medina there is a grave kept for him by the side of the prophet, it being

a Muslim belief that Christ will one day return to earth to establish everywhere the religion of Mohammad, who will appear shortly before the day of judgment. Mohammad borrowed from the religion of the Jews, of which he had only a hearsay knowledge, the belief in good and bad angels, some of the laws relating to marriage, fasting, &c., and there were certain customs so closely intertwined with the pagan faith of his countrymen that he wisely sought not to remove some of them, but to purify them. He abolished the frightful practice of killing female children and made the family tie more respected, although to this day its looseness is a great blot upon Islám. He retained the worship of the Kaaba stone, and the pilgrimages thereto. In like manner, as already shewn (see page 118), the Roman Catholic missionaries, when they came to Northern Europe, made use of what was best in the old Teutonic religion and worked it into their own. Where sacred trees had stood, they raised crosses; where holy wells had been dug and the babbling spring was a deity, they built churches and abbeys; where love and piety had

named flower and insect after the 'lady' Freyja, goddess of plenty, they put the Virgin Mary in her stead. The goddess Hel, who in a realm of bitter cold received the souls of those who died of old age or disease (for only to those who died in battle was there given endless mirth and feasting in Valhalla with the Alfadir, Odin) was changed from a person to a place where heat, not cold, is the torment. In the bleak North, life without fire is dreary, which explains why Hel was pictured as ruling in a *cold* region.

But we must return to Mohammad, not forgetting to say that Mecca had probably been a sacred city long before his time, the Arabs having a tradition that it was the birthplace of their tribes. Near to the Kaaba, there is the well Zemzem, said to be fed by the spring that opened before Hagar's eyes when Ishmael was a-nigh dead with thirst, and when, in a mother's mad despair, she cast him from her that she might not see him die. The legend further relates that they settled on the spot with a tribe who were passing by, and thus arose the sacred city of Mecca.

Mohammad counselled men to live a good life,

and to strive after the mercy of God by fasting, charity, and prayer, which he called 'the key of paradise.'

This is one among many passages in the Korân counselling men to prayer :

'Observe prayer at sunset, till the first darkening of the night, and the daybreak reading—for the daybreak reading hath its witnesses.

'And watch unto it in the night . . . and say, "O my Lord, cause me to enter (Mecca) with a perfect entry, and to come forth with a perfect forthcoming, and give me from thy presence a helping power."'

There is preserved a sermon on charity, said to have been preached by Mohammad, which is so beautiful that it deserves a place beside the apostle Paul's stately words in 1 Corinthians xiii., while in reading it, we think of that touching saying by Jesus as to the Eye that sees with approval a gift to the thirsty, although that gift be but 'a cup of cold water.'

"When God made the earth, it shook to and fro till He put mountains on it to keep it firm. Then the angels asked, "O God, is there anything in Thy creation stronger than these mountains?" And God replied, "Iron is stronger than the mountains, for it breaks them." "And is there anything in Thy creation stronger than iron?" "Yes, fire

is stronger than iron, for it melts it." "Is there anything stronger than fire?" "Yes, water, for it quenches fire." "Is there anything stronger than water?" "Yes, wind, for it puts water in motion." "O our Sustainer, is there anything in thy creation stronger than wind?" "Yes, a good man giving alms; if he give it with his right hand and conceal it from his left, he overcomes all things. Every good act is charity; your smiling in your brother's face; your putting a wanderer in the right road; your giving water to the thirsty is charity; exhortation to another to do right is charity. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he has done in this world to his fellow-men. When he dies, people will ask, What property has he left behind him? But the angels will ask, What good deeds has he sent before him?"'

Mohammad commanded his followers to make no image of any living thing, to show mercy to the weak and orphaned, and kindness to brutes; to abstain from gambling, smoking tobacco and the use of strong drink.

The great truth which he strove to make real to them was that God is one, that, as the Korân says, 'they surely are infidels who say that God is the third of three, for there is no God but one God.'

To return to the story of his life. It says very much for the pure motives that swayed him that his own nearest friends were the first to believe

in him. Others called him fool, mad poet, star-gazer, but he held on his way, although for some time with scant success, his followers being, up to the fourth year of his mission, few and humble. It is said that he was one day talking with a rich man whom he wished to convert, when a poor blind man came up and asked to be taught by Mohammad, who, cross at being interrupted, spoke roughly to him. But his conscience quickly smote him for his harshness, and the next day's Revelation reproved him. It is thus given in the Korân:

> 'He frowned, and he turned his back,
> Because the blind man came to him!
> But what assured thee that he would not
> Be cleansed by the Faith,
> Or be warned and the warning profit him?
> As to him who is wealthy,
> To him thou wast all attention;
> Yet is it not thy concern if he be not cleansed:
> But as to him who cometh to thee in earnest,
> And full of fears—him dost thou neglect.'

Mohammad afterwards sought the man, saying, 'He is thrice welcome on whose account my Lord hath reprimanded me.'

He began to teach abroad in Mecca and other places, but the attacks on him grew so bitter, that he had to leave the city. On his return his wife died. She was a true and noble-natured woman and her memory is held in deep reverence, visits being paid to her tomb every Friday. To add to Mohammad's troubles, poverty came upon him, and a plot being laid to kill him, he had to leave Mecca a second time, and started for Medina, where some of his converts lived. On his way thither he and a friend hid in a cave, over the mouth of which a spider spun its web as they lay inside. When their pursuers came to the cave they felt sure, on seeing the web, that Mohammad was not there. 'We are but two,' said his friend, full of fear. 'There is a third,' replied Mohammad, 'it is God Himself.'

The Muslims date their years from the prophet's flight to Medina, just as we date history from the birth of Jesus Christ. On reaching that city, all was changed. A glad welcome greeted Mohammad and he at once became ruler and lawgiver.

But he ceased to be only the preacher of a creed beautiful and simple, and became a warrior

He was angered against those who had refused to believe in him and, since he could not persuade them, he sought to compel them. So he offered idolaters and Jews either death or conversion to Islám, and urged his followers to battle by promising immediate entrance into Paradise to those who fell in the fight. They flung themselves without fear into the contest, for to them it was God's battle against the unfaithful, and Islám! His will be done.

Mohammad's anger was hottest against the Jews. He had striven hard to win them to his side. He admitted their religion to be divine; he adopted many of their rites and doctrines and made Jerusalem the Kiblah or place toward which men were to turn in daily prayer. But they ridiculed him and cut him to the quick with satire and sneer, so that to the day of his death he was their bitter foe. The Sabbath was changed to Friday, which was the day when the Arabs were used to meet in assembly, and Muslims were commanded to turn their faces toward Mecca. After wars against Arabs, Jews and Christians, in the greater number of which Moham-

mad was the victor, he had conquered the whole of Arabia and extended his rule to other parts. So great had his power become that he sent messages to kings and princes demanding that they would submit to Islám.

Towards the tenth year after his flight, he went on his last pilgrimage to Mecca at the head of 40,000 Muslims. On his return to Medina, feeling death near, he dwelt near the mosque that he might take part as long as he could in the public prayers. After calling the people together he asked them, as did Samuel when he bade farewell to the children of Israel, 'whether he had wronged anyone or whether he owed aught to anyone' and then after reading some verses from the Korân, went home to die. He passed away in his sixty-second year amidst the deep grief of the people, and a great tumult arose at the news, for many thought him immortal.

He was a great and true man, and the religion which he set forth met the needs of men in the East as no other religion did in that day, nor is it likely that it will ever cease its hold upon certain races, or

that Mohammad will give place to any other prophet.

We must no more blame him for many of the sad errors and vices mixed up with Islám than we should blame Jesus for the evils which have crept into Christianity. Even for the wars that he waged he may have found excuse in the history of the Jews. The Old Testament is reddened, in its books of their history, with the story of the shameful cruelty of which they were guilty, of tender children slaughtered, of whole cities put to the edge of the sword, and all this butchery done, as they would have us believe, in the name and at the command of their God, of whom their ideas were so gross that they more than once offered human sacrifices to him. And we all know what terrible wars and massacres have taken place in the name of our Christian religion, and how but a very few years ago it was held by many Christians that man could own and buy and sell his fellow-man.

Brighter and better days have come since then, and Mohammadans, like Christians, do not now seek to spread their faith by violence and blood-

shed. I have dwelt upon this because it is needful to see how little of the grosser part of each religion belongs, in most cases, to the ideas of its founder.

In addition to what has been said about Islám, Muslims believe that God in different ages made known His will to prophets in scriptures, of which all but four are lost; the Pentateuch (or first five books of the Bible), the Psalms, the Gospel, and the Korân; the Korân only being perfect. Also that there will be, after many strange events, a resurrection and a final judgment, when the souls of both the good and bad will have to pass over a bridge laid across hell, finer than a hair and sharper than a sword. The souls of the good will pass quickly across it, but the wicked will fall into hell headlong. The idea of heaven is that of a place of gross delights; while a never-ending hell will be the fate of all non-believers.

The success of Islám was great. Not 100 years after the death of the prophet, it had converted half the then known world, and its green flag waved from China to Spain. Christianity gave way before it, and has never regained some

of the ground then lost, while at this day we see Islám making marked progress in Africa and elsewhere. Travellers tell us that the gain is great when a tribe casts away its idols and embraces Islám. Filth and drunkenness flee away, and the state of the people is bettered in a high degree.

When we hear good-meaning people lament that negroes should become Mohammadans, let us remember that this was not the feeling of Jesus when his disciples told him that they had forbidden a man who was casting out demons in his name. 'And Jesus said, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.' And this, I am sure, he would say to-day of the Mohammadan missionaries, if he were amongst us.

Along the northern coasts of Africa and nearly to the equator, from Turkey to within the borders of China, and among the larger islands of the East, the faith of Islám spreads, divided into sects, and numbers millions who offer to Allâh their five-fold daily prayer. From every mosque the blind mueddin or crier proclaims at daybreak; 'There is no God but God; Mohammad is His prophet. Prayer is better than sleep; come to prayer,' and then each

pious Muslim falls facewards to the holy city Mecca.

I should add that the wars of Islám did not leave waste and ruin in their path, but that the Arabs, when they came to Europe, alone held aloft the light of learning, and in the once famous schools of Spain, taught 'philosophy, medicine, astronomy, and the golden art of song.' The Arabic words used in science—*algebra, almanack, alcohol,* and others, together with many names of stars, remain among us as proofs of what Arabia has given to Europe.

The Mohammadan Bible is the Kuran or Korân. *Al-Korân* or *The Reading* (as we say; *The Bible*) contains the entire code of Islám; that is, it is not a book of religious precepts merely, but it governs all that a Muslim does.

I shall not waste limited space in giving the absurd story which the Muslims tell about their Korân, but briefly speak of its contents. It is entirely the work of Mohammad, and is made up of revelations which he believed came to him from

the time of his sojourn on Mount Hira. It is regarded not only as inspired every word, but as uncreated and eternal. It consists of 114 Súrahs or chapters, which were dictated by Mohammad to a scribe, and the copies thus made were thrown into a box. A year after Mohammad's death, such portions as remained were collected 'from date-leaves, tablets of white stone, bones, parchment-leaves,' and memories of men, and copied without order of time or subject, the longest chapters being put first.

The titles of the chapters are taken from some chief matter in them, but are mostly unmeaning, affording no clue to the contents, as for example, 'The Cow;' 'Thunder;' 'The Fig;' 'The Elephant.' Each begins with the words, 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful,' and also tells where it was revealed to Mohammad.

The Korân is written in the purest and most elegant Arabic, and suffers much by translation. Teaching the oneness of God, it is largely made up of stories, legends, laws and counsels which show how much use Mohammad made of all that he had heard of Jewish history and lore.

Much of it, as we read it, seems utterly unmeaning, other parts of it move us by the beauty of their desert songs of God's majesty and purity.

The Muslims do not touch it with unwashed hands, and never hold it below the girdle round their waist, while to them nothing is more hateful than to see it in the hands of an unbeliever.

They regard this short chapter as equal to one-third of the whole book in value :

> 'Say there is one God alone—
> God the eternal;
> He begetteth not and He is not begotten,
> And there is none like unto him.'

I have marked many Súrahs with the view of quoting from them, but can give only three or four specimens.

This Súrah, named 'the folding up,' thus describes the last day :

> 'When the sun shall be folded up.
> And when the stars shall fall,
> And when the mountains shall be set in motion,
> And when the she-camels with young shall be neglected,
> And when the wild beasts shall be huddled together,
> And when the seas shall boil,
> And when the souls shall be joined again to their bodies,

And when the leaves of the Book shall be unrolled,
And when the heavens shall be stripped away like a skin,
And when hell shall be made to blaze,
And when paradise shall be brought near,
Every soul shall know what it has done.'

At the end of another Súrah, and one of the latest in point of time, this fine passage occurs:

'God! there is no God but He, the Living, the Eternal. Slumber doth not overtake Him, neither sleep; to Him belongeth all that is in heaven and earth. Who is he that can plead with Him but by His own permission? He knoweth that which is past, and that which is to come unto them, and they shall not comprehend anything of His knowledge but so far as he pleaseth. His throne is extended over heaven and earth, and the upholding of both is no burden unto Him. He is the Lofty and Great.'

Again:

'It is God who hath ordained the night for your rest, and the day to give you light: verily God is rich in bounties to most men; but most men render not the tribute of thanks.

'This is God your Lord, Creator of all things; no god is there but He: why then do ye turn away from Him?

Again:

'O my son! observe prayer, and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and be patient under whatever shall betide thee: for this is a bounden duty. And distort not thy face

at men; nor walk thou loftily on the earth; for God loveth no arrogant vain-glorious one.

'But let thy pace be middling; and lower thy voice; for the least pleasing of voices is surely the voice of asses.'

And as a last quotation:

'There is no piety in turning your faces towards the east or the west, but he is pious who believeth in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the scriptures, and the prophets; who for the love of God disburseth his wealth to his kindred, and to the orphans, and to the needy, and the wayfarer, and those who ask, and for ransoming; who observeth prayer, and payeth the legal alms, and who is of those who are faithful to their engagements when they have engaged in them, and patient under ills and hardships, and in time of trouble; these are they who are just, and these are they who fear the Lord.'

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

In the remarks which were made on the right use of legends of the past, I promised to show you why the Bible should be read as we read other books. It is a common notion that the Bible has to be treated in some different way; and owing to that chiefly, it is, although one of the most read, yet the most misread of books and the least understood. The care which has to be applied, the free, full use of the powers of the mind which has to be made to enable us to get at the meaning of any book, is often most strangely withheld by people when reading the Bible.

The fact has already come before you that there are several book-religions in the world, and this will have caused you to ask in what way the book on which our Christian religion is founded differs from the books on which other religions are founded. For it is clear that what Christians

believe concerning the Bible, namely, that it is the work of men specially helped by God, who made use of them to reveal truths needful for us to know and which none of us could ever have found out for himself, and that it is free from the errors and defects which every other book contains, is believed in a still more intense degree by the Brahmans concerning the Veda, by the Muslims concerning the Korân, and so on.

The knowledge of this renders it needful for us to enquire whether our belief is ill or well grounded, whether we have surer proof of its truth than the Brahman has of his, for to neglect this is to confess that we shrink from comparing the Bible with the Veda, fearful lest it might suffer thereby, and the grand truths which it contains become less dear to us.

There are plenty of books within reach which give an account of the contents of the Bible, of the order in which the books which compose it are believed to have been written, of the supposed dates and places, of the names of the authors, and like matters relating to its wonderful history. All these may here be passed by and give place to a

few simple facts which are more or less known, but which are much overlooked, and upon which all proof as to the value of the Bible must ever rest.

The first of these is that the Bible was produced like every book; *men wrote it.* It is made up of a number of works of the most varied kind; history, poem, proverb, prophecy, epistle; all written by learned or unlearned men, many of them unknown to one another, since they lived in different lands and centuries apart; each as he wrote his history or poured forth his song little thinking that it would form part of a book which has been precious to millions of men for hundreds of years, which 'goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king; which is woven into the literature of the scholar and colours the talk of the street; which mingles in all the grief and cheerfulness of life; which blesses us when we are born; gives names to half Christendom; rejoices with us; has sympathy for our mourning;' a book, every portion of which, strange to say, has been regarded as of equal value; whether it be the Book of Esther or the Epistle to the Romans.

And not only did men write it; *men also collected its books together.* The books of the Old Testament were gathered together by the Jews, when or by whom among them is not known. That ancient people guarded them with jealous care, using all pains to prevent errors entering into the copies which were made, every verse and letter being counted.

The books of the New Testament were chosen from many others and assumed their present form about the end of the second century after Christ, but men and churches have differed much and still differ as to which books should be left out and which admitted.

Not only did men write the several books of the Bible and collect them into one volume: *men also translated them* into our own and other languages, doing, in the case of our translation, a great and noble work, filled with the richness, simplicity and power of our sweet mother-tongue, before cramped and stilted words of Latin birth were brought into it. But grand and lasting as their workmanship was, our translators made many mistakes, some of them wilful ones, (as, for example, when, in their

rarely-printed 'Preface to the Reader,' they say that they have made use of certain words by the express command of the king), which a body of learned men of our day have been busily employed in correcting. Then the division of the books of Scripture into chapters and verses, some of these, as where Genesis ii. 1-3 is severed from Genesis i., being wrong; and the headings to the chapters, some of which give a false idea of their contents, was each the work of men. The words printed in italics are not in the manuscripts which were translated, but were added by our translators to complete the sense, although in some cases they obscure it.

Now no one asserts that the men who *collected* the books together were inspired by God to do it, so that they could not by any means leave out the right books and put in the wrong books, nor that the men who *translated* the Bible were inspired, so that they could not give a wrong meaning to the Greek or Hebrew in turning it into our own or any other tongue. We must therefore put these on one side and pass to the men who wrote the books, and who, it is

commonly believed, were inspired by God to do it and preserved from all error in their work.

Various opinions are held about the nature and extent of this inspiration, some few believing that every word, every syllable and every letter is the direct utterance of God; others, that the writers were kept from error when revealing his will, but not when speaking upon matters of history and science. All debate about this is in vain, because if any manuscripts ever existed, which were the work of men thus helped, we have no true copies of them, since the oldest manuscripts differ in important details. And even if the very handiwork of each writer could be found, the belief that he was inspired would in no way help us to understand what he had written. But it is said the Bible writers claim to speak the very words of God, and it is this which makes it so needful for us to listen to them with obedient heart and trustful soul. Of course such a claim, like the claims of certain men in past and present days to power to forgive sins, is more easily made than proven, and all we can do is to go to the Bible itself and see what is therein said and how far it supports the claim.

The frequent use in the Old Testament of such solemn phrases as 'Thus saith the Lord;' 'And God said;' 'God spake these words and said;' the verses which tell us that 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God;' that 'holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' form the chief foundation on which the claim is rested.

Upon the use of the phrases quoted, some very instructive facts are given by Sir Samuel Baker in his book on the 'Nile Tributaries.' He says (pp. 129-131) 'the conversation of the Arabs is in the exact style of the Old Testament. The name of God is coupled with every trifling incident in life. Should a famine afflict the country, it is expressed in the stern language of the Old Testament: "The Lord has sent a grievous famine upon the land," or "The Lord called for a famine and it came upon the land." Should their cattle fall sick, it is considered to be an affliction by divine command; or should the flocks prosper and multiply, the prosperity is attributed to divine interference. . . . . This striking likeness to the descriptions of the Old Testament is

most interesting to a traveller when living among these people. With the Bible in one hand, and these unchanged tribes before the eyes, there is a thrilling illustration of the sacred records; the past becomes the present; the veil of 3000 years is raised, and the living picture is a witness to the exactness of the historical description. At the same time there is a light thrown upon many obscure passages in the Old Testament by the experience of the present customs and figures of speech of the Arabs; which are exactly like those that were practised at the periods described. . . . Should the present history of the country be written by an Arab scribe, the style of the description would be purely that of the Old Testament, and the various calamities, or the good fortunes that have, in the course of nature, befallen both the tribes and individuals would be recounted either as special visitations of divine wrath or blessings for good deeds performed. If in a dream a particular course of action is suggested, the Arab believes that God has *spoken* and directed him. The Arab scribe or historian would describe the event as the "*voice* of the

Lord" having spoken unto the person; or that God appeared to him in a dream, and "*said*," &c. Thus much allowance would be necessary on the part of a European reader for the figurative ideas and expressions of the people.'

When we go to the Bible, we find therein exactly what those who have some knowledge of its wonderful history might expect. It bears the traces of the long years through which it was slowly growing, book by book. In its earlier pages we find legends which, as already shown, are very like to those of nations with whom the Jew were connected by race or came in contact; we find there ideas about God which are coarse and degrading, which became lofty only as the Jews advanced in the thought of him as pictured in the worthy language of the prophets, and which were altogether different from the ennobling teaching of Jesus and of Paul; we find how deeply human all its writers were; how each differs in his style of telling anything and is marked by it; how fully they shared the erroneous beliefs of their time; nor is it easy to find in what they have

said truths which, in one form or another, have not been stated by the writers of some of the sacred books into which we have dipped.

The Bible records the experience of the wisest and best of men of the past in their search after truth, but the claim to special inspiration which is made for them, and which they would perhaps not claim for themselves, is one that cannot any longer be admitted. Even if it be admitted, the inspiration would be without value unless it was also bestowed upon the men who copied the manuscripts, upon the men who collected them together, upon the men who translated them, and in short, upon every one who in any way has had to do with placing the Bible in the hands of people of any age and clime.

It may appear a graceless thing to write any words which shall seem to lessen the value of a book which for hundreds of years has been so precious to men. But the loss is more seeming than real, since riddance of error leaves room for truth to enter, and it is far better to be quit of false notions in early life than to undergo the painful and weary task of uprooting them in after years.

The truths which are enshrined in the Bible are not less true because frail men spake them, nor is that 'inspiration of the Almighty' which 'giveth understanding' a less mighty fact because we find that the writers of Scripture had it not different in kind to that which comes to every man who opens his soul to receive it. It dwelt in those earnest ones whose yearnings after the unseen found utterance in Bible, Rig-Veda, Zend-Avesta, Tripitaka, King and Korân, and it dwells in earnest souls to-day, wherever the love of truth abides. And for us, in whatever written or spoken word, or sound of many-voiced nature, we find that which speaks to our heart as true, *there* is for us an inspired truth.

CONCLUSION.

THIS outline sketch would have been more complete if an account had been given of some other religions besides that of our northern ancestors that have passed away, but of which fragments remain here and there in hoary rite and custom.

For example, there was the religion of EGYPT, land of marvel and of mystery: fountain of knowledge at which Assyrian, Greek and Hebrew drank; noted for its discoveries in science, and for the majesty, and withal the vividness, of its art; for the highly civilized state of its people, whose daily life—the luxury and pleasures of the few—the toil and hardship of the many—is pictured on wall-paintings, preserved from decay by a rainless climate through five thousand years. That religion, standing in awe before the mystery of life, looked upon all life as divine, and had its upper gods of Nature, Space and Time; its sun and river deities; its worship of insect, bird, reptile and beast, chiefest of which was the Apis

bull of Memphis; its belief in an immortal life, and a judgment after death, of which the proofs are near us in the mummies of animals and human beings, and in the great sacred book known as the 'Ritual of the Dead.' Behind the forms of that religion in pompous festivals, minute ceremonies, sacrifices, charms, and months and days each dedicate to the gods, there were secrets which the priests kept to themselves, through which the religion became a priestcraft.

There was the religion of GREECE, revelling in sunlight and gladness; its gods most strong and goddesses most fair, dwelling on Mount Olympus, were beings not free from the follies and vices of men, for they spent their lives in fighting, feasting, scheming and love-making. Ruling mankind, they were in their turn ruled by Fate, and therefore inspired neither fear nor respect. In the Greek religion the beautiful was the divine, and he was accounted most godlike who added by his art to all that pleased the eye, or that fell musically upon the ear. Lovely forms filled every nook and corner of that sunny land: the echoes of the nymphs' soft voices were heard among the

mountains, they dwelt within the forest-trees, and slept beside the streams. There was no priestly caste, for to pray and sacrifice was the right of every free-born Greek; there were no sacred books, but deep reverence for the poet's words. Rich feasts and festivals, mysteries and oracles, entered largely into the Greek religion, but the cheerfulness of this life did not lend itself to colour the ideas of a life to come, which were dim and misty.

There was the religion of ROME, empire once splendid and stately beyond compare; a religion with no lustre in its eye, no life in its heart, if heart it had, but as loveless a thing as the soul whom Tennyson so powerfully describes in his 'Palace of Art.' It was a worship of law and duty, neither of which we should leave undone, but it was not an obedience to law and a loyalty to duty springing out of love. It was given to the gods as their due, as a man pays his just debts. There were gods many, Jupiter being the chief, and under him deities representing the powers of nature, or ruling over money, trade, the house, &c., and a goodly number had been

borrowed from Greece, but they left their souls behind them. A long list of festivals filled the year, and song and dance entered into the honours paid the gods, but the true object of worship among the Romans was Rome. That a higher life beat within the souls of some is proved by the noble thoughts of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and others, which have come down to us.

In brief, the Egyptians worshipped *nature;* the Greeks, *beauty;* and the Romans, *law.*

Then there were the religions of Babylon, Phœnicia, and other mighty nations; of the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of Peru; and there is a valuable field of study in learning about the beliefs and practices existing among the tribes of Africa, America, Polynesia, &c., since they furnish illustrations of those earliest forms of religion out of which have slowly risen the ennobling beliefs of the most advanced races of mankind.

But all this, and very much more, must be passed by.

There is, however, one question which makes itself heard in many parts of this book and to which an answer must be given. It is this: How

do the facts brought together herein about the great religions of the world bear on our Christian religion, and what is the relation between them and it? To worthily answer this would fill many pages, and it must suffice to give one or two reasons for replying that our religion, while beyond question the highest of all, takes a place not distinct from, but among all religions, past or present. Its relation to them is not that they are earthborn, while it alone is divine, but it is the relation of one member of a family to other members, who are 'all brothers, having one work, one hope and one All-Father.'

I know that it is not always easy to think thus of it, because it is dear to us as no other religion ever could be, linked as it is by love towards him who lived the saintliest life and died the martyr-death, and in following whose example we follow all that is beautiful and divine. But viewing it as one amongst others, much that otherwise perplexes and even dismays us is taken away, and we cease to wonder that its history is so like that of other religions. We are able to understand why it has grown from small beginnings and been subject

to many changes, as they have, if we believe that it also had its rise in the nature of man. We understand how the early disciples of Jesus treasured with loving care the memory of what he had said, and how, as the years rolled on, it seemed good to some of them to commit what they knew or had heard to writings which in course of time took shape as the New Testament. We see how the simple faith of the first Christians became sadly corrupted, how word-mongers and creed-makers stifled it, how, petted in kingly courts and clad in earthly armour, its kingdom became of this world. We read of its victories and defeats; its divisions and their brood of hate, cruelty and martyrdom; its failure to regain some of the ground lost, and to win to itself races whose religions were grey with age when it was born. And we read too, how it was embraced by the nations to whom there has been given so great a part to play in this world's rough story; and how, by engendering that love of man in which, despite its many errors and cruelties, lies its real strength, it made helpful to the world's good those mighty forces to which it was thus joined.

All this, and very much more that could be added, becomes clear as the noonday if Christianity be regarded as like in kind to other faiths; while treated as altogether unlike, its slow progress and varying fortunes bewilder us, and our trust grows feeble and perishes.

I have said thus much, because neither you nor I are likely to give up our religion and become Muslims or Buddhists, and also because I would have you without fear compare it with theirs, and gladly welcome in each that which we know is common to all, and which makes us 'all brothers, because we have one work and one hope and one All-Father.'

I have been more careful to collect facts relating to the matter of this book than to ask what they mean, since in every study the mastery of facts and the knowledge of their relation to one another is of the first importance. Conclusions can always wait and always take care of themselves. But now that the end of our story is reached, I must say a few words suggested by what it tells.

In all things we see progress. Deep down

in the earth's crust there are remains of the dim specks of life from which have come forms of life higher and still higher, till the lordliest and the best appeared.

The lichens that rest 'starlike on the stone' and tree-trunk, that, with the mosses, cover the wide moorlands and adorn the mountain-side where nought else will grow, these prepare a soil into which the noblest trees of the forest can strike their roots.

The caves and old river-beds disclose the rough stone tools which the common sense of savage man shaped to point and edge, and by the use of which he made possible that which we are to-day in this Age of Iron. And it is the same with man's higher nature. First cringing, awe-struck, before some mis-shapen stone, or before the dead yet moving powers in cloud and river, then worshipping living creatures, and so on step by step until, with now a stumble and now a fall, he rises from worship of the thing made to worship an unseen power ; from reverence, born of fear, for the *strong*, to adoration born of love for the *holy*. Every morning there steal up the eastern sky the early rays

that gently prepare our waking eyes for the brighter light of the sun, whose glory would dazzle if it burst upon us suddenly, and in like manner truth has entered into the minds of men little by little as their knowledge of the causes and nature of things has grown, and still it increases and will increase, shining 'more and more unto the perfect day.'

Look where we will, we find that when man's bodily wants, be they few or many, have been supplied, there remains a craving which no gift of earth can satisfy, the craving of his heart after something higher and better than himself. All men have it, although in some it sleeps, and it is the same in all none the less because it shows itself in different ways. Under various forms we see expressed a sense of need; a belief as in the *savage*, in a power *mightier* than his own; as in the *civilized* man, in a power *holier* than his own; a feeling of duty which, in the lowest races, takes what is to us a brutal shape, but which is none the less such a feeling; as, for example, when the Feejee kills his aged parent under the fear that he may become too feeble to undertake

the journey to another world; and lastly, the universal belief that a man's soul or self does not die, but haunts the place it lived in, or betakes itself to some far-off happy land.

Such being the nature of man, we must be careful lest we speak or think meanly of him. He who has a low and unworthy idea of his nature will act unworthily; while he who feels to what heights of nobleness the worthiest of our race have reached will take heart and hope. If anyone be told that he cannot choose the right and love the true, and live the pure, he will feel that if it be so, to try is hopeless work. But we are very sure that it is not so, else how could there dwell within us sorrow and unquiet after doing wrong, if we did not feel that we can do, and ought to do the right? If such chilling unfaith in themselves and in their kind had been in the heart of the saintly men whose lives have blessed the world; who, like salt, have kept the mass from decay; how, think you, could they have dared and done? They had faith in man as the fruit of faith in what man had

done; they felt that the life of man is not what it will one day become, and this it was that fired them to earnest effort in the service and salvation of their fellows, and to help on the time when earth shall be the paradise it never has been yet:

> 'Who rowing hard against the stream,
> Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
> And did not dream it was a dream.'

It is the faith of such men, some of whose lives have been looked at in this book, that you and I must share. Life is full of duty, and to do well the work that lies close at hand is to fulfil the purpose for which we were sent here. The weakest and youngest amongst us is a power for good as well as for evil, and it should be our aim to do our part on the side of ever-increasing human goodness against ever-lessening human badness.

There is but one life, if life it may be called, which seems so terrible; it is the life that is idle or selfish. Those few words express more than one might think, but their meaning has been set to finer music than I can command by Leigh Hunt

in the story of Abou Ben Adhem, with which I close this book :

'Abou Ben Adhem—may his tribe increase !—
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw amid the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold ;
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the vision in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head,
And with a voice made of all sweet accord,
Replied, "The names of them that love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still, and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow men."

The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
He came again with a great wakening light ;
He showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo ! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.'

APPENDIX.

NOTE A, page 22.

ON THE LIKENESS BETWEEN CERTAIN CHALDEAN AND JEWISH LEGENDS.

The resemblance between some of these legends has been shown at p. 22, but the most remarkable and interesting illustration appeared while the first edition of this book was passing through the press. Among the tablets brought from Assyria by the late Mr George Smith, who, it will be remembered, was first sent there at the expense of the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*, are a series of fragments which, joined to some smaller pieces in the British Museum collection, give 'the history of the world from the Creation down to some period after the fall of man.' Pending the issue of a promised full translation of the legends, their accomplished discoverer announced his success in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, 4th March 1875, wherein he gave the following brief account of the contents of the tablets:

'Whatever the primitive account may have been from which the earlier part of the Book of Genesis was copied, it is evident that the brief narration given in the Pentateuch omits a number of incidents and explanations—for instance, as to the origin of evil, the fall of the angels, the wickedness of the serpent, &c. Such points as these are included in the

Cuneiform narrative; but of course I can say little about them until I prepare full translations of the legends.

'The narrative on the Assyrian tablets commences with a description of the period before the world was created, when there existed a chaos or confusion. The desolate and empty state of the universe and the generation by chaos of monsters are vividly given. The chaos is presided over by a female power named Tisalat and Tiamat, corresponding to the Thalatth of Berosus; but as it proceeds the Assyrian account agrees rather with the Bible than with the short account from Berosus. We are told, in the inscriptions, of the fall of the celestial being who appears to correspond to Satan. In his ambition he raises his hand against the sanctuary of the God of heaven, and the description of him is really magnificent. He is represented riding in a chariot through celestial space, surrounded by the storms, with the lightning playing before him, and wielding a thunderbolt as a weapon.

'This rebellion leads to a war in heaven and the conquest of the powers of evil, the gods in due course creating the universe in stages, as in the Mosaic narrative, surveying each step of the work and pronouncing it good. The divine work culminates in the creation of man, who is made upright and free from evil, and endowed by the gods with the noble faculty of speech.

'The Deity then delivers a long address to the newly-created being, instructing him in all his duties and privileges, and pointing out the glory of his state. But this condition of blessing does not last long before man, yielding to temptation, falls; and the Deity then pronounces upon him a terrible curse, invoking on his head all the evils which have since afflicted humanity. These last details are, as I have before stated, upon the fragment which I excavated during my first journey to Assyria, and the discovery of this single relic in

my opinion increases many times over the value of *The Daily Telegraph* collection.

'I have at present recovered no more of the story, and am not yet in a position to give the full translations and details; but I hope during the spring to find time to search over the collection of smaller fragments of tablets, and to light upon any smaller parts of the legends which may have escaped me. There will arise, besides, a number of important questions as to the date and origin of the legends, their comparison with the Biblical narrative, and as to how far they may supplement the Mosaic account.'

In a valuable contribution to the *Academy*, 20th March 1875, Mr Sayce showed that the Phœnician legends form, as it were, the link between the Chaldean and the Hebrew so far as the so-called Elohistic portion of Genesis is concerned: this being especially noticeable in the legend of the Creation and the sacrifice of Isaac (upon which cf. Haug's 'Aitareya-Brâhmana;' Max Müller's Anct. Sans. Lit. 408-17; Gubernati's Zool. Mythol., I. 69; and the Greek myth of Agamemnon and Iphigenia). Mr Sayce also explained the very close resemblance between the Babylonian and Jewish legends of the garden of Eden, the Deluge, and the Tower of Babel, the Phœnician analogies failing us here altogether. But the whole subject is still in its infancy, and, as Prof. de Gubernati remarks, "when we shall be able to bring into Semitic studies the same liberty of scientific criticism which is conceded to Aryan studies, we shall have a Semitic mythology; for the present, faith, a natural sense of repugnance to abandon the beloved superstitions of our credulous childhood, and more than all, a less honourable sentiment of terror for the opinion of the world, have restrained men of study from examining Jewish history and tradition with entire impartiality and severity of judgment.' (Vol. II. 410, 412.) The *Academy*, 29th Nov. 1890, gives a still earlier version of the Creation legend

than that discovered by the late Mr George Smith. The text, which is Akkadian, is assigned by Mr Pinches to 3000 B.C.

NOTE B, page 31.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

In endeavouring to give a clear and untechnical account of Laplace's nebular hypothesis so that its main features may be comprehended by young persons, I have not thought it desirable to introduce any remarks upon the insufficiency of that hypothesis to explain the arrangement of the varying masses of the major and minor planets of our system. My dear and lamented friend Mr Proctor, with his accustomed clearness and independent examination of all hypotheses, sought to show that 'a theory involving combined processes of accretion and contraction is the true hypothesis of the evolution of the solar system.' (See his works generally, but especially 'Other Worlds than Ours,' pp. 210-19, and an article on 'The Past and Future of our Earth,' *Contemp. Rev.*, Dec. 1874.) The accretion, due to the indrawing of matter from the infinite space around, falls in with all that we have learnt of the intimate relation between every system of every galaxy composing a universe wherein neither sun nor minutest atom dwells in isolation.

Subject to the modification thus indicated, all our present knowledge points to nebular condensation as the origin of suns with their systems. That vast masses of matter exist in a gaseous and highly incandescent state is proved by the spectroscope. That such masses are cooling by radiation, with the inevitable result of condensation and rotation is equally certain; and if the result of the observations of Mr Ellery and others, now extending over a period of some years, upon the nebula surrounding the star Eta Argûs in the southern hemisphere may be relied upon, then such a process

is going on under the eyes of the astronomers of to-day. (See Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, xxv. p. 192; xxviii. pp. 200, 225; xxix. p. 82; xxxiv. p. 269.)

NOTE C, page 51.

ON THE PUNISHMENT OF ANIMALS AND LIFELESS OBJECTS AS THE CAUSE OF INJURY TO MANKIND.

The belief entertained by man in the myth-making stage of his progress that all motion in things around is actuated by personal life and will analogous to his own, and differing only in degree, goes far to explain why even inanimate objects have been held criminally responsible for disaster occasioned by them. Commenting upon the mental condition which causes the savage to bite the stone over which he stumbles and the civilized man to kick the chair against which he bruises himself, Dr Tylor remarks in his 'Primitive Culture,' Vol. I. 259, that it 'may be traced along the course of history, not merely in impulsive habit, but in formally enacted law. The rude Kukis of Southern Asia were very scrupulous in carrying out their simple law of vengeance, life for life; if a tiger killed a Kuki, his family were in disgrace till they had retaliated by killing and eating this tiger, or another; but further, if a man was killed by a fall from a tree, his relatives would take their revenge by cutting the tree down and scattering it in chips. A modern king of Cochin China, when one of his ships sailed badly, used to put it in the pillory as he would any other criminal. In classical times the stories of Xerxes flogging the Hellespont and Cyrus draining the Gyndes occur as cases in point, but one of the regular Athenian legal proceedings is a yet more striking relic. A court of justice was held at the Prytaneum, to try any inanimate object, such as an axe or a piece of wood or

stone which had caused the death of any one without proved human agency, and this wood or stone, if condemned, was in solemn form cast beyond the border (Grote, iii. p. 104; v. p. 22). The spirit of this remarkable procedure reappears in the old English law (repealed in the present reign in 1846 *), whereby not only a beast that kills a man, but a cart-wheel that runs over him, or a tree that falls on him and kills him, is deodand or given to God, *i.e.*, forfeited and sold for the poor: as Bracton says, "Omnia quæ movent ad mortem sunt Deodanda." And among the records of ancient legislation in France upon similar matters, we have, on the 4th June 1094, the hanging of a pig for devouring the babe of a cowherd at Laon, and twenty-six years later the excommunication by the Bishop of Laon of a swarm of caterpillars; while 'in 1516, the Courts of Troyes, complying with the prayers of the inhabitants of Villenoxe, admonished the caterpillars by which that district was then infested to take themselves off within six days, on pain of being declared "accursed and excommunicated!"' A sanction for the punishment of animals would be found in the Jewish law, which directed that 'if an ox gore a man or woman that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned and his flesh shall not be eaten.' (Exodus xxi. 28; Cf. also Genesis ix. 5.)

* The short Act of one clause (9 and 10 Vict., c. 32) declares that 'the law respecting the forfeiture of chattels which have moved to or caused the death of man and respecting deodands is unreasonable and inconvenient,' and it enacts 'that from and after the 1st September 1846 there shall be no forfeiture of any chattel for or in respect of the same having moved to or caused the death of man.'

NOTE D, page 79.

ON HUMAN AND OTHER SACRIFICES AT THE LAYING OF FOUNDATIONS OF BUILDINGS.

The original purpose of this hideous custom was probably the offering of a sacrifice of blood to the Earth-goddess. Nothing was undertaken without the making of an oblation to the dreaded spirits who presided over every department of nature and over every act of man's life. So when the support and protection of the earth was sought for the building whose foundations were laid in her, the initiatory act was a sacrificial one, to be followed by more offerings of living things if the foundations gave way or the walls fell in, because these were interpreted as signs of the earth's disfavour or of her unwillingness to bear the burden laid upon her.

Besides the legends of which that given at page 79 is a specimen, there is a mass of historical evidence both ancient and modern as to the sacrifice of human beings at the foundation-stone laying or subsequent strengthening of houses, castles, churches, or bridges, among both pagans and Christians. Modern instances are of course the more valuable as evidencing the persistency of the practice from a high antiquity. In 1813 the ice on the Elbe broke down one of the dams, and the Government inspector went to superintend the repair. An old peasant, so the inspector reported, sneered at his efforts, saying, 'You will never get the dyke to hold unless you first sink an innocent child under the foundations.' In 1843, when a new bridge was to be built at Halle in Germany, the people told the architect and workmen that the piers would not stand unless a living child was immured in the foundations. 'Some years

ago the piers of a railway bridge under construction in Central India were twice washed away, when nearly finished, by the floods, and a rumour spread abroad among the Bheels of the neighbouring jungles that one of them was to be seized and sacrificed by the engineers, who had received such manifest proof of mysterious opposition to their work' (Lyall's 'Asiatic Studies,' p. 19), and Schrader says that when the great railway bridge over the Ganges was begun, every mother in Bengal trembled for her child. In October 1881 the King of Ashanti put fifty girls to death, that their blood might be mixed with the 'swish' or mud used in the repair of the royal buildings, which an earthquake had damaged. Among the Dyaks of Borneo, at the erection of the largest house, a deep hole was dug for the first post, which was then suspended over it. A slave girl was then placed in the hole, at a signal the lashings were cut, and the balk fell upon the girl, crushing her as a sacrifice to the spirits. The traveller St John saw a milder form of the rite performed when the chief of the Quop Dyaks set up a flag-staff near his house, a chicken being thrown in to be crushed by the descending pole. As bearing on this gradual substitution of an animal victim, or of an image or symbol, for a human victim, the following usage which prevails in Roumania may be cited. When a new dwelling is to be erected, the masons endeavour to catch the shadow of a stranger, and then lay the foundation stone on it. Or the stranger is enticed to the foundation stone, when the workman secretly measures his body or his shadow, and buries the measure under the foundation stone. It is believed that the measure of the shadow is the equivalent of the shadow itself, and, since barbaric belief identifies soul with shadow, that the person thus measured will languish and die within forty days. The success of the proceeding depends upon the ignorance of the victim as to the part he is playing,

wherefore careless passers-by near a building in course of erection may chance to hear the warning cry, 'Beware, lest they take thy shadow!' So deeply-rooted is this superstition that not long ago there were professional shadow-traders who made it their business to provide architects with the victims necessary for securing their walls. 'Of course the man whose shadow is thus interred must die,' argues the Roumanian, 'but being unaware of his doom, he feels neither pain nor anxiety, so it is less cruel than to wall-in a living man' (Gerard's 'The Land Beyond the Forest,' ii., pp. 17, 18). If the Bulgarians cannot get a human shadow, they measure the shadow of the first animal that passes by. Numerous relics of a substitutionary kind have been found, as, for example, in Holland, in the shape of rude images of babes in their swaddling-clothes, and the successive steps of decay of the custom are traced until we reach its shadowy survival in our modern practice of depositing coins of the realm and copies of current newspapers under foundation stones of public structures.

The abolition of the grosser forms of sacrifice was also helped when the older idea of offerings to the Earth-spirit gave place to the more refined idea of providing the dwelling or the sacred edifice with a protecting or patron spirit, which has degenerated into the vulgar belief in haunted houses.

Concerning the practice among Jews and Christians, traces of it occur in the Old Testament, and in the erection of churches. When Jericho fell, Joshua is reported to have said, 'Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest shall he set up the gates of it' (Josh. vi. 26); and in 1 Kings xvi. 34, the rebuilding is thus referred to: 'In his days (*i.e.*, of Ahab) did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the

foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.' So the Jews evidently believed that their God sanctioned this horrid custom in so far as making it the condition of the rebuilding of the city. In 1885, on the restoration of Holsworthy church, in Devon, a skeleton bearing every appearance of the person having been buried alive—for a mass of mortar was over the mouth, and the stones were huddled about the remains—was found embedded in the mortar and stone of the south-west angle wall. When the church of Blex in Oldenburg was building the foundations gave way, being laid in sand, and the authorities of the village crossed the Weser, bought a child from a poor mother at Bremerleke, and built it alive into the foundations. Grimm says that in Denmark a lamb was walled-in under the altar of every church to make it secure; and when the north wall of the parish church of Chulmleigh in Devon was taken down a few years ago—a wall of Perpendicular date, say about the fifteenth century—in it was found laid a very early carved figure of Christ crucified to a vine, shewing advance in ideas, as compared with the living victim immured in Holsworthy church. The burial of relics of the patron saint under the altar in every Roman Catholic church doubtless has its origin as much in the old sacrifice of victims as in the worship of ancestors. A striking article on the subject of this note was contributed by Mr Baring Gould to *Murray's Magazine*, March, 1887, and further references will be found in Grimm's 'Teutonic Mythology,' ii. p. 844, iii. pp. 1141-42, iv. p. 1646; Tylor's 'Primitive Culture,' i., pp. 94 *ff.*; Ralston's 'Songs of the Russian People,' p. 127; Frazer's 'Golden Bough,' i., p. 144; 'Folk Lore Journal,' i. p. 23; 'Magyar Folk Tales' (Folk Lore Society), pp. 118, 376; and 'La Tradition,' 1888, p. 210.

NOTE E, page 144.

THE SACRED BOOKS OF HINDUISM.

The sacred literature of Hinduism comprises the four *Vedas* and certain mystical and philosophical books connected with them, as the *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads;* the *Sûtras* or brief digest of sacrificial rules and Brahmanic meditations; the *Purânas* and *Tantras*, upon which the popular creed is founded; while closely related to the earlier period of Hinduism are two epic poems not inaptly spoken of as the Iliad and Odyssey of the East, and entitled the *Râmâyana* and *Mahâbhârata*. There is also a celebrated law-book, known as the *Institutes of Menu* or *Manu*, from which the Hindu legend of the creation given at p. 24 is quoted, and which treats of religious as well as legal subjects.

Under the general name of Vedas there are included four collections of hymns, of which the Rig-Veda is the oldest and most important, the others consisting mainly of extracts from it. The collections are respectively known as the

Rig-Veda, ...	Veda of Hymns of Praise.
Sâma-Veda, . .	Veda of Chants.
Yagur-Veda, . . .	Veda of Sacrificial Formulas.
Atharva-Veda (also called Brahma-Veda), . .	Veda of Incantations.

Each Veda consists of two portions; Sanhitâ or *collection* of Mantras or *hymns*, and Brâhmana, which gives 'information on the proper use of the hymns at sacrifices, on their sacred meaning, on their supposed authors, and similar topics.' On the authorship and final collection of the Vedic hymns Dr Muir remarks: 'For many ages the successive generations of these ancient rishis continued to make new contributions to

the stock of hymns, while they carefully preserved those which had been handed down to them by their forefathers. The fact of this successive composition of the hymns is evident from the ancient index to the Rig-Veda, which shows that these compositions are ascribed to different generations of the same family as their "seers." The descendants of the most celebrated rishis would no doubt form complete collections of the hymns which had been composed by their respective ancestors. After being thus handed down, with little alteration, in the families of the original authors for several centuries, during which many of them were continually applied to the purposes of religious worship, these hymns, which had been gathering an accumulated sanctity throughout all this period, were at length collected in one great body of sacred literature, styled the Sanhitâ of the Rig-Veda—a work which in the Purânas is assigned to Vedavyâsa and one of his pupils.' (Origl. Sanskrit Texts, Part II. pp. 206, *et seq.*)

Of the ten books which compose the Rig-Veda, the first book contains 191 hymns. The hymns to Agni are placed first, then those to Indra, followed by those addressed to other leading deities. The contents of the next six books are arranged in like manner and are each ascribed to a single poet or poetic family; 'thus far we seem to have a single collection made and ordered by the same hand.' Of the remaining books, the ninth is notable because the whole of its hymns, 114 in number, are addressed to the Soma, while the tenth book, the contents of which are of various authorship, has the same number of hymns as the first book.

The Sâma-Veda consists entirely of verses from the Rig-Veda which were chanted at the Soma-ritual. The verses composing the Sanhitâ of the Yagur-Veda were chiefly selected from the Rig-Veda for muttering during various

sacrificial ceremonies. The fourth Veda contains, in addition to selections from the Rig-Veda, hymns of a later age addressed to gods who are objects of fear to their cringing worshippers, and to a multitude of demons whom the suppliants seek to appease by promises and bribes.

Of the Brâhmanas attached to each Veda, attention can here be called only to the Satapatha-Brâhmana which is appended to the White or later portion of the Yagur-Veda and which in addition to descriptions of various festivals, has some curious stories, one of which narrates the Deluge (See Max Müller's Anct. Sans. Literature, p. 425). The relation of the Brâhmanas to the metrical portion of the Vedas may be compared to that of the writings of the Fathers to the New Testament or to that of the Talmud to the Old Testament, but, as already stated in the text, they are regarded, like the hymns, as divinely inspired.

The opinions of Sanskrit scholars differ as to the age of the oldest hymns of the Rig-Veda, Dr Haug placing them as far back as B.C. 2400; Prof. Whitney between B.C. 1600 and B.C. 2000; and Prof. Max Müller B.C. 1200 to B.C. 1500. (For discussion upon the probable date of the oldest portion of the Rig-Veda, see Whitney's 'Oriental and Linguistic Studies,' pp. 21, 73, and Max Müller's 'Chips,' vol. i., pp. 11, 114). The Sûtras (meaning 'string' or 'thread') consist of strings of short sentences explaining and giving directions concerning public and household religious rites and stating in pithy form the long result of Brâhmanic thought and speculation. They are greatly revered and out of those portions which deal with public and private duties the famous Laws or Institutes of Manu have been developed. There are also six works, known as the Vedângas, or 'limbs of the Veda,' which treat of the grammar, metre, proper pronunciation (a matter of as much importance in Brahmanic eyes as correct under-

standing) of the Vedic texts. The chief object of one Vedânga is 'to convey such knowledge of the heavenly bodies as is necessary for fixing correctly the days and hours of the Vedic sacrifices.'

The Âranyakas (from *âranya*, a forest) are treatises which were 'prepared for the edification of those who have retired to live a life of contemplative solitude and asceticism in the woods, as it is theoretically the duty of every Brahmanic householder to do, after a certain period of life,' and the Upanishads are works closely related to the above, but giving amplitude to meditations on the questions which have ever perplexed the human mind and which called forth vain reply in those great systems of Hindu philosophy which arose many centuries before Christ.

From this outline, naked and incomplete as it is, we may yet see what a vast body of literature the Rig-Veda-Sanhitâ gathered round itself, a literature the age of which may never be accurately known, but the antiquity of which is beyond question.

The Râmâyana and Mahâbhârata, both of which, certain portions excepted, were doubtless written before the rise of Buddhism, form, together with the Purânas, the popular sacred literature of the Hindus, the great mass of whom are wholly ignorant of the Veda and its connected writings. The Râmâyana is the work of one author and mainly narrates the history of Râma, the seventh incarnation or avatar of Vishnu, whose supremacy is upheld throughout the poem. Amidst much that is absurd there are passages of exceeding tenderness and grace, as the following episode shows. Râma's father had in a moment of weakness promised to grant one of his queens any two boons she might please to ask, and she, jealous that Râma might supplant her own son in the throne, requested his banishment. When he is gone the remorse of

the king is great, and there rises before him the memory of a death which he had accidentally caused when a young man. He tells his favourite queen how, when hunting, his arrow by mischance shot a poor boy who was the comfort of his parents, and how as the father leaned over the body he besought the still tongue to speak:

'Come, dear child, embrace thy father; put thy little hand in mine;
Let me hear thee sweetly prattle some fond, playful word of thine.
Ah! who 'll read me now the Vedas, filling my own heart with joy?
Who, when evening rites are over, cheer me, mourning for my boy?
Who will bring me fruits and water, roots and wild herbs from the wood?
Who supply the helpless hermit, like a cherish'd guest, with food?
Can I tend thine aged mother till her weary life is done?
Can I feed her, soothe her sorrow,—longing for her darling son?'

The king then tells how the father cursed him for the deed and said, 'For this thing that thou hast done, as I mourn for my beloved, thou shalt sorrow for a son,' and he feels that the day of the prophecy's sad fulfilment has come. Such pathetic incidents as this and, to borrow a more familiar example, the touching tribute to a mother's tenderness in the hour of need which is told in 2 Kings iv. 18-20, move us more than the story of kingcraft in which each is imbedded.

The Mahâbhârata, or 'great history of the descendants of Bhârata,' contains above 200,000 lines, and is the work of different authors at different periods. It is a story of quarrels between rival families, whose adventures and wars do not however occupy more than one-fourth of the narrative, the remaining three-fourths consisting of a variety of episodes and legends, amongst which latter is one of the Deluge closely resembling that given in the Satapatha-Brâhmana, but told at greater length; one incident being

that when the flood was over it was discovered that among the treasures which had been lost was the 'Amrita, or Drink of Immortality.' The gods met in council to consider how the loss might be repaired, when Vishnu advises them to churn the ocean that the vexed sea might give back its spoil. With the aid of Brahmâ and the King of the Serpents the lost Amrita is recovered. We see from this incident that the Vedic gods had fallen from their high places, and were no longer regarded as immortal, except through partaking of the beverage of immortality. The Mahâbhârata is noted for a deeply religious and philosophical poem called the 'Bhagavad-Gîtâ, *i.e.*, 'Revelations from the Deity,' which is interwoven in the midst of a battle scene.

The Purânas, which are barely a thousand years old, are eighteen in number. Their contents are very miscellaneous, embracing cosmogony, legends (many of which are derived from the Mahâbhârata and cast in an expanded form), genealogies of the gods, directions about festivals, &c., all written in the form of dialogue and presented in a style which secures their being widely read by the common people. They are evidently of priestly origin, one main object in their compilation being the exaltation of Vishnu and Siva, each of whom has Purânas written to his praise and glory; Vishnu more than Siva. The Tantras are certain works in which directions are given for the correct performance of rites in honour of the 'energy' or wife of Siva, many of which are of a debasing kind.

The sacred literature of Hinduism thus shows three distinct periods in the history of that religion: 1st, the Vedic, represented by the Vedas (the fourth Veda excepted, as being the latest), Sûtras and forest-treatises; 2d, the Brahmanic, by the laws of Manu and the Epic poems, a period during which the systems of philosophy, the Hindu

triad, the division of people into caste, &c., arose; and, Buddhism having in the meantime risen and declined, 3d, the modern Hindu, represented by the Purânas and kindred works.

Very much of interest, which is beyond the province of this book to deal with, awaits the student of the secular literature of India,—its dramas, fictions, lyric poetry and fables. Of these an able analysis is given in Manning's 'Ancient and Mediæval India' (Allen & Co., 30s.); while all that the ordinary reader would care to know concerning the Vedic and Brahmanic periods and literatures is given in a condensed but lively form in Talboys Wheeler's 'Hist. of India' (Trübner & Co., 3 vols., 57s.), Sir Alfred Lyall's 'Asiatic Studies,' 12s., Miss Richardson's 'Iliad of the East' (Macmillan & Co., 7s. 6d.), and Mr Griffiths' 'Specimens of Indian Poetry' (Trübner & Co., 6s.). Mr Griffiths has also recently completed a translation of the 'Râmâyana' (Trübner & Co., 84s.); while the Mahâbhârata is the subject of a learned article in the *Westminster Review*, April 1868. For full information on the matters of this Note the most valuable and accessible books are Prof. H. H. Wilson's Works, especially vols. vi.-x. for the contents of the Purânas); Colebrooke's Essays; Muir's Sanskrit Texts; Max Müller's Rig-Veda; all which are published by Messrs Trübner & Co., but, owing unfortunately to the limited number of readers, somewhat high-priced.

NOTE F, page 157.

ON THE WORDS BRAHMĂ OR BRAHM AND BRAHMÂ.

Brahmă or Brahm is the nominative singular of the neuter noun Bráhman, which meant originally 'force, will, wish, and

the propulsive power of creation.' 'But,' remarks Professor Max Müller, 'this impersonal bráhman as soon as it is named grows into something strange and divine. It ends by being one of many gods, one of the great triad worshipped to the present day.' Brahmâ is the nominative singular of the masculine noun.

NOTE G, page 166.

THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE PÂRSÎ RELIGION.

By the name Zend-Avesta, or, as the native scholars have it, Avesta-Zend, 'text or scripture' and 'commentary,' is said to be signified, but the meaning of the words is uncertain. The books included under this title are ascribed by the Pârsîs to Zoroaster, to whom it was said God revealed them in the form of conversations, as, according to the Old Testament, He talked with Moses. But with the exception of the Gâthâs, which are the oldest portion, and which may embody what Zoroaster communicated to his disciples, the Avesta is probably, as its fragmentary character denotes, the result of tradition gathered from many sources.

It consists of the *Yazna*, the *Vispered*, which together with a third portion, the *Vendidâd*, make up the *Vendidâd Sâde;* and the *Yesht*, which added to some smaller pieces, composes the *Khordeh-Avesta*, or 'lesser Avesta.'

These include the *Avesta* proper, which is written in an ancient Persian language, from which the modern dialects of Persia are probably descended. Attached to the Avesta are translations and explanations of its text, some written in Pehlevî, an ancient mixed language, and others in Pârsî, an older form of the modern Persian. To this additional matter the name *Zend* is more correctly given; and besides this, there are still later

additions, the most prominent of which is the *Bundehesh*, a digest of Zoroastrian scriptures and doctrines. The principal portion of the Avesta is the Yazna (from a word allied to the Sanskrit *yajna*, meaning 'sacrifice'). It consists of seventy-two chapters, many of which drily detail the chief 'personages and objects recognized by the Zoroastrian religion, while the remaining and older portion is of greater interest. It includes the Gâthâs, five collections of unrhymed metrical hymns, which, speaking broadly, are related to the rest as the Rig-veda to the Brâhmanas. The first hymn is headed 'The Revealed Thought, the Revealed Word, the Revealed Deed of Zarathustra the Holy; the Archangel's first song, the Gâthâs.' 'They are all more or less devoted to exhortations on the part of the prophet to forsake the *devas*, and to bow only before Ahuramazdâ,' to whom, as well as to his angels, and to earth, fire, water, &c., prayers are addressed in other portions of the Yazna and also the Vispered. The Vendidâd embodies the moral and ceremonial code, by which a man may keep pure. The whole is in the form of conversations between Ormuzd and Zoroaster, and the first part recites the sixteen Aryan countries; the second part treats of laws and ceremonies; the third part of spells against evil spirits and diseases. The Yesht contains the germ of legends introduced into the great Persian epic, the Shahnameh, and addresses to the archangels, the sun, the heavenly fountain, the souls of the departed, &c.

I hope that enough has been said in the brief chapter on Zoroastrianism to show that it is not easy to over-estimate the importance of the Avesta as a guide to our knowledge of a religion, noblest and purest of the ancient faiths, and the influence of which upon surrounding and subsequent beliefs was marked. (Spiegel's 'Avesta die heiligen schriften der parsen,' tr. Bleek; Dr Haug's Essays, reprinted in Trübner's

Oriental Series; Whitney's 'Oriental, &c., Studies,' art. 'Avesta;' and Müller's 'Chips,' vol. i., are among the leading authorities. On the use of the word 'Zend,' see Max Müller's 'Lect. on Language,' vol. i. p. 237, 6th edit.)

NOTE H, page 178.

LEGENDS RELATING TO THE BIRTH OF BUDDHA.

The belief in transmigration is common to both Brahmanism and Buddhism, and abundant illustration of this is afforded in the Játakas, an ancient collection of fables, narrating Gautama's exploits in the 550 births through which he passed before attaining Buddhahood. In the legend concerning him which Bishop Bigandet has translated from the Burmese (itself apparently a compilation from a MS. in the Pali, or sacred language of the Buddhist literature), it is said, that while dwelling in the abode of the Nats, living a life of contemplation, he received the news that, having passed through the needful preceding stages of existence, he was to become a Buddha, the twenty-fifth of that name who have appeared in the world to open for men the way to deliverance. According to the Buddhists, the places of different orders of beings are arranged as follows, extending from the bottom of the earth to a measureless height above it. Lowest of all are the four states of punishment; then the abode of man; above this the six seats of Nats, beings who play a great part in the affairs of the world, and who are akin to the spirits a belief in whom is common to all religions; above these dwell the Brahmas, who are free from all low passions, yet not fully weaned from love of the world. Above these are seats occupied by the Arupa, who have reached the summit of perfection, and whom one step farther will carry into Nirvana. After a while, the

future Buddha, then known as Phralaong, having received the congratulations of the Nats, and made choice of birth in a princely caste as befitting his high calling, descended to earth, and at that moment great wonders appeared; a radiant light was spread over ten thousand worlds; the blind saw, the dumb spake, the lame walked, the deformed stood erect, prisoners were freed; refreshing breezes blew gently over the earth; cooling springs burst forth, and soft showers fell; flowers of richest colour bloomed; lilies dropped from the sky, scattering sweet scent around; the songs of the Nats were heard by the glad ears of men, and the choicest perfumes were diffused through the air. Then came from their high abode spirits to watch over the palace where the child was to be born, and to ward off harm from him and his royal mother, whose soul rested in a perfect calm. Then in due time the child was born, and at once stood erect before the wondering men and spirits, while, leaping, he said, 'This is my last birth; there shall be to me no other state of existence; I am the greatest of all beings.' At his birth there sprang from out the ground the famous tree, under the shadow of which he was to become Buddha. 'The Bo-tree is the "pippul" (*Ficus religiosa*) of India. It differs from the Banyan (*F. Indica*) by sending down no roots from its branches. Its heart-shaped leaves, with long attenuated points, are attached to the stem by so slender a stalk that they appear in the profoundest calm to be ever in motion; and thus, like the leaves of the aspen, which, from the tradition that the cross was made of that wood, the Syrians believe to tremble in recollection of the events of the crucifixion of Christ, those of the Bo-tree are supposed by Buddhists to exhibit a tremulous veneration associated with the sacred scenes of which they were the witnesses.' ('Tennent's Ceylon,' Vol. I., p. 342.) Among the people who came, glad-hearted, at the news of

the wonderful child's birth, special mention is made in the legends of a devout old man, reminding us of Simeon, who, for his great holiness, had the gift of prophecy. Although joy overflowed his soul at the great future which lay before the child, his eyes filled with tears because he knew that he should not live to see it. Seven days after the birth of Theidat, for so they named the child, because of the service he was to render to mankind, his mother died, and for her virtues was taken to the dwelling-place of the Nats.

Bishop Bigandet remarks ('Legend,' &c., p. 16), that 'it must be confessed that the conception of Phralaong in his mother's womb is wrapped up in a mysterious obscurity which appears to exclude the idea of conjugal intercourse. The Cochin-Chinese in their religious legends, pretend that Buddha was conceived and born from Maia in a wonderful manner, not resembling at all what takes place according to the law of nature.' In giving 543 B.C. as the date of Buddha's death, I have followed that generally received as based on the Sinhalese authorities. Profs. Westergaard, Kern, T. W. Rhys Davids and other authorities, however, place that event a century or more later, which, in so uncertain a matter as the older Hindu chronology, is not a very remarkable difference.

NOTE I, page 184.

THE SACRED BOOKS OF BUDDHISM.

The Tripitaka or sacred canon of the Buddhists is in three divisions, the Vinaya-pitaka; the Sutta-pitaka; and the Abhidhamma-pitaka; the second and third pitakas being 'sometimes comprehended under the general name of Dharma or law.' Pali, the sacred language of the Buddhists, is an ancient dialect, related to the Vedic Sanskrit as Italian is

related to Latin, and was once spoken in that part of India where Buddhism had its rise. In their belief that it is divine and the parent of all other languages, the Buddhists form no exception to some other religionists in their notion concerning the language of their sacred books. (See Max Müller's 'Lect. on Language,' vol i. pp. 146, 161, 6th edit.) The Tripitaka, which was found to exist in Sanskrit also, has been translated into the languages of the different countries where Buddhism was propagated; into Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, Burmese, &c., but for our most accurate knowledge respecting it we are largely indebted to the materials furnished by the island of Ceylon, among which are two works of great value, the Dîpavansa, or history of Buddhism in Ceylon, and the Mahavansa, a history of that island from the earliest times to the fourth century after Christ.

The canonical books and their commentaries form a mass of literature bewildering in its vastness; the three Pitakas alone extending to 592,000 stanzas, and the Atthakathá or commentaries, containing 361,550 more. According to a statement quoted by Spence Hardy in his 'Legends and Theories of the Buddhists,' the canon contains 29,368,000 letters, (five or six times more than the Bible contains,) and Max Müller tells us that 'the Tibetan edition of the Buddhist canon, consisting of two collections, the Kanjur and the Tanjur, numbers about 325 volumes folio, each weighing in the Pekin edition from four to five pounds. The Sutta-pitaka, which contains the discourses of Buddha, comprises five separate works, the last of which is composed of fifteen books, the second being the 'Dhammapada,' or 'path of virtue' (see p. 188). The most popular portion of this pitaka are the sûtras or discourses concerning his 550 births, which profess to have been narrated by Buddha himself, and which are embraced under the title 'Pansiya-panas-játaka-

pota.' Messrs Trübner make the welcome announcement of an edition of the 'Játaka,' comprising Pali text edited by Faüsboll and English translation by Childers. Upon Buddhism generally, see Rev. Spence Hardy's 'Manual' (out of print); 'Eastern Monachism' and 'Legends and Theories of the Buddhists' (Williams & Norgate, 7s. 6d. each); Bigandet's 'Legend of Gaudama,' from the Burmese (Trübner & Co., 18s.); 'Buddhagosha's Parables,' prefaced by Max Müller's translation of the 'Dhammapada' (Trübner & Co., 12s. 6d.); Sir M. C. Swámy's 'Sutta Nipáta,' a translation of certain discourses from the Sutta-pitaka (Trübner, 6s.); Alabaster's 'Wheel of the Law' (Trübner, 14s); Max Müller's 'Chips,' vol. i.; also his 'Introduction to the Science of Religion' (Longmans, 10s. 6d.); Bartélemy Saint-Hilaire's 'Le Bouddha et sa Religion' (Paris, 1860); Eugene Burnouf's 'Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhisme indien' (Paris, 1844); Schlagintweit's 'Buddhism in Tibet' (Trübner & Co., 42s.); Otto Kistner's 'Buddha and his Doctrines' (Trübner, 2s. 6d); Beal's 'Travels of Fah-Hian and Sung-Yun' (Trübner, 10s. 6d.); Ib. 'Catena of Buddhist Scriptures' (Trübner, 15s.); Ib. 'Romantic Legend of Buddha,' (Trübner, 12s. 6d.); Rhys Davids, on 'Buddhism' in vol. iv. of new edition of *Encyclo. Brit.*; Cunningham's 'Bhilsa Topes,' or Buddhist Monuments of Central India (Trübner, 21s.); the Journals of the Royal Asiatic Society, the works of Bunsen, Colebrooke, Ferguson, Wilson, &c.

NOTE K, page 202.

THE SACRED BOOKS OR CLASSICS OF THE CHINESE.

In giving an account of the books included under this name, Dr Legge tells us that those now recognized as of highest authority in China are comprehended under the denominations of 'The Five King' and 'The Four Shoo.'

'The Five King' are the five canonical works, containing the truths upon the highest subjects from the sages of China, and which should be received as law by all generations. The term *shoo* simply means 'writings' or 'books.' ('The Chinese Classics,' vol. i., p. 1.) The Five King are the *Yih*, or 'Book of Changes;' the *Shoo*, or 'Book of Historical Documents;' the *She*, or 'Book of Poetry;' the *Le-Ke*, or 'Record of Rites;' and the *Ch'un Ts'ew* or 'Spring and Autumn,' annals extending from B.C. 721 to 480.

Confucius made some additions to the Yih, Shoo and She, but 'the Ch'un Ts'ew is the only one of the Five King which can, with an approximation to correctness, be described as of his own "making."'

The four books are the *Lun Yu*, occupied chiefly with the sayings of Confucius; the *Ta Hëŏ*, or 'Great Learning,' by Tsang-Sin, a disciple of Confucius; the *Chung Yung* or 'Doctrine of the Mean' (these three works will be found fully analysed in the first vol. of Legge's 'Chinese Classics') and the *Works of Mencius*, the 'Master's' most illustrious disciple. 'After the death of Confucius, there was an end of his exquisite words; and when his seventy disciples had passed away, violence began to be done to their meaning.' So runs the ancient chronicle, from which we further learn that to keep the people in ignorance the courtiers persuaded the Emperors of the Ts'in dynasty (B.C. 220-205) to burn the sacred books and the writings of the philosophers, and to slaughter a large number of scholars for keeping copies of the forbidden books. But when the Emperors of the Han dynasty came to the throne they set themselves to repair the loss, and by great effort succeeded in recovering the ancient literature, since which 'the successive dynasties have considered the literary monuments of the country to be an object of their special care,' and Dr Legge is satisfied that the

evidence is complete that the classical books of China have come down from at least a century before the Christian era, substantially the same as we have them at present.

See Legge's 'Life and Teachings of Confucius,' 10s. 6d.; Ib. 'Works of Mencius,' 12s.; Ib. 'Chinese Classics,' £16, 16s, (Trübner); Freeman Clarke's 'Ten Great Religions' (Trübner, 14s.); and the works of Archdeacon Hardwick, Doolittle, Meadows, &c.

The mere recital of the names of the sacred books which has filled the larger portion of these Notes indicates how impossible it is within the limits of a single life to acquire full knowledge of the book-religions of the world alone. And when we remember how hard it is to understand the nature of the doctrinal differences which divide Christendom into many sects, and to master the meaning of the technical terms of the separate organizations, we must not wonder if we fail to discern clearly the salient features of religions in the study of which these difficulties are multiplied a thousand-fold. But one thing we surely cannot fail to learn: the lesson of a larger charity towards all.

INDEX.

A.

'Abou Ben Adhem,' legend of, 259.
Abraham and Ishmael, Muslim legend of, 218.
„ and Zoroaster, 166.
Adam, Muslim legend about, 218.
„ and Eve, 48.
Africa, spread of Islám in, 231.
Age, probable, of deposits in 'Kent's Hole,' 60.
„ „ of Vedic hymns, 273.
Agni, god of fire, 146, 155.
„ birth of, and Vedic hymn to, 146.
Ahriman, Persian god of darkness, 23, 47, 167, 170, 172.
Ahura Mazdâ, *see* Ormuzd.
Al-Ilâh Allâh, 209.
All-Father (Alfadir), 129.
Altar of Agni, 155.
Ancestors, offerings to spirits of, 155.
„ worship of, 136, 197.
Angels, Buddhist belief in, 280.
„ Mohammadan „ 221.
„ Zoroastrian „ 170.
Angles, 137.
'Angra-Mainyus' (Ahriman), 167.
Animals, criminality of, 51, 265.
„ domestication of, 62, 73.
Antiquity of man in Europe, 55.
Apollo and Pythôn, myth of, 105.
Arabs, character of the, 217.
„ figurative language of, 243.
„ past influence of, in Europe, 232.
Aranyakas, 274.
Aricia, 96.
Arthur, king, 106.
Aryan civilization, 65-88.
„ languages, table of, 69, 71.
„ myths and fairy tales, 105-113.
Aryan, religion, 88-104.
„ tribes, primitive, 65.
„ „ home of, 68.
„ „ separation of, 87, 139.
Aryans, civilization of, 65-88.
„ division among the Eastern, 140.
„ religion of, 88-104.
Asoka, king, 189.
Assyrian legend of the Creation, etc., 262.
Atharva-Veda, 271.
Atthakathá, 283.
Attraction, law of, 31, 33.
Avatárs of Vishnu, 160.
Avesta-Zend, *see* Zend-Avesta.

B.

Baal, a Semitic god, 209.
Bab-il, 208.
Babylon, captivity of Jews in, 174.
Babylonian legend of the Creation, 22.
Bactria, 165, 169.
Baker, Sir Samuel, quoted, 243.
Balder, 130.
Bel, a Semitic god, 209.
Belus, „ 23.
Berosus, 22.
Beth-el, 208.
Bhagavad-Gitâ, 276.
Bible, mode of study of the, 237-247.
„ origin and growth of, 239-242.
„ inspiration of, 242.
Birth of Buddha, legends relating to the, 280-282.
Birthplace of mankind, supposed, 54.
Black Stone, the, 215, 218, 221.
Blood-brothers, 83.
Books, sacred *see* Sacred Books.
Bo-Tree, 28

Brahma, 24, 157, 160, 277.
,, creation of heaven and earth by, 25.
Brahmâ, 158, 277.
Brahma-Veda, 271.
Brahman, Buddha and the, 186.
Brâhmanas, 271, 273.
Brahmans, rise of the, 158.
,, tyranny of the, 158.
Brahmanism, *see* Hinduism.
Breath and life, 95.
Bridge of souls, 170, 230.
Britain, Great, more than once beneath the sea, 56.
Bronze Age, 86.
Brutes, difference between man and, 50, 55.
,, punished as criminals, 51, 265.
Brythonic Celts, 120.
Buddha, life of, sketch of the, 178-183.
,, as ninth descent of Vishnu, 161.
,, leading doctrines taught by, 190.
,, legends as to the birth of, 280.
,, stories concerning, 185.
,, teaching of, 187.
Buddha's death, date of, 282.
,, four paths to Nirvâna, 191.
,, ten commandments, 192.
Buddhism, countries professing, 189.
,, and Roman Catholicism, likeness between, 194.
,, a state religion of China, 198.
,, rise and decay of, in India, 189.
,, source of success of, 192.
Buddhist councils, 183.
,, fables, *see* Jâtaka.
,, forms of worship, 195.
,, legends of the past, 45.
,, scriptures, 184.
Buildings, sacrifices on erecting, 79, 267-270.
Bull and cows, worship of, 162.
Burial, Parsî, 172.
Burning of body, 155.
,, of remains of Buddha, 183.

C.

Cæsar, Julius, 119.
Caste, 158.
Cattle, wealth in, 73.
Caverns, discovery of stone implements in, 54.
Celtic gods, 120.
,, languages, 69.
,, races, religion of, 119-126.
Ceylon, Buddhist relics and literature in, 190, 281.
Chaldean and Jewish legends, relation between, 261.
Chalk, nature and rate of deposit of, 40.
Changes on the earth's surface, 4, 37, 56.
Charity, Mohammad's sermon on, 223.
China, religions of, 196-206.
,, sacred books of, 202.
Chinese manners and customs, 197.
,, reverence for learning, 197.
,, worship of ancestors, 197.
Christ, Muslim reverence for, 220.
Christian religion, relation of, to other religions, 252.
,, spread of, in Europe, 116.
Christians in Arabia, 219.
Civilization of the Aryans, 65-88.
,, of pre-Aryan races, 62.
Climate of Europe, changes in, 55.
Comets, origin of, 31.
Commandments, ten, of Buddha, 192.
Confucius, sketch of the life of, 199-202.
,, teaching of, 203.
Cooling of sun, planets, and moons, 34.
Copper, 74.
Councils, Buddhist, 183.
Counting, 76.
Creation, legends of, in Genesis, 13-15.
,, Babylonian legend of, 22, 261.
,, Egyptian, 23.
,, Greek, 27, 94, 104.
,, Hindu, 24.
,, New Zealand, 94, 102.
,, Persian, 23, 94.
,, Scandinavian, 25, 94.
,, of man, 23, 26, 28, 49, 52, 53, 94.
,, told by Science, 29, 43.
Criminality of animals, etc., 51, 265.
Crust of the earth, 33, 36, 39, 40.
Cyrus, 173.

D.

Dawn as a source of myth, 101.
'Day,' meaning of, in Genesis, 20.
Dead body dreaded by the Pârsîs, 172.
Death, barbaric ideas of, 91, 135.
,, Buddha on the law of, 186.
,, Confucius on, 202.
,, of Mohammad, 228.
,, date of Buddha's, 282.
Deodand, 266.
Deus, same as Dyaus, Zeus, etc., 101, 2.
Divus (bright), 101.
Development of man's higher nature, 256.
Devil, the, 48, 175.
,, temptation of Buddha by, 181.
Dhammapada, 188, 283.
Diana, temple of, 96.
Disease personified, 123.
'Div,' a form of dyu, 88.
Druids, 100, 124, 136.
Dyaus, 104, 147.
,, displaced by Indra, 147.
,, same as Zeus, etc., 102.
,, -pitar, same as Jupiter, 102.

E.

'Earth,' changes in surface of the, 4, 37, 55.
,, crust of the, 33, 36, 39.
,, future of the, 35.
,, invoked as 'mother,' 101, 156.
,, once a sun, 34.
,, store of heat in the, 34.
Easter, 135, 150.
Eddas, 127, 136.
Eden, Garden of, 15, 263.
Egg, notion that heaven and earth are made from an, 25.
Egypt, religion of ancient, 248.
Egyptian legend of the Creation, 23.
Eight steps to Nirvâna, Buddha's, 191.
El, a Semitic god, 208.
Elves, 95, 107.
Epic poems of Aryan nations as outgrowth of myth, 106.
Europe, changes in climate and surface of, 37, 55.
,, antiquity of man in, 58.
,, early races in, 61-63.
,, spread of Christianity in, 116.
Evil, source of, 176.

F.

Fairy Tales, common origin of many, 110.
,, Giant who had no heart in his body, 111.
Family life, Aryan, 77.
Fates, 134.
Finns, notion of, about heaven and earth, 25.
Fire, worship of, 171.
,, -god, Agni, 146, 155.
,, ,, hymn to, 146.
Fo, the Chinese name of Buddha, 198.
Forces and energies of nature, 31.
Four paths to Nirvâna, Buddha's, 191.
Freyja, the 'lady,' 222.
Frost-giants, 26.
Funeral hymn, Hindu, 156.
Future life, belief in a, 78, 154, 170, 218, 230.

G.

Ganges, River, 162.
Garden of Eden, 15, 263.
Gâthâs, 168.
Gautama Buddha, 178-183.
Gellert, myth of the hound, 106.
Gender, 90.
Genesis, legends of creation in, 13-15.
,, creation of man in, 48-50.
,, meaning of 'day' in, 20.
Giant who had no heart in his body, 111.
Giants, 133.
Glacial Epoch, *see* Ice Age.
Gods, Aryan, 101.
,, Celtic, 120.
,, Semitic, 208.
,, Teutonic, 128.
,, tree-, 98.
,, Vedic, 145.
Goidelic Celts, 120.
Golden Bough, 98.
Gospel oak, 99.
Grand Lama, the, 195.
Greece, religion of ancient, 249.
Greek language, 70.
,, legend of the creation, 27.
,, legend of the first man, 46.
Gregory the Great, 117.
'Grimm's law,' 71.

Groves, sacred, 95.
Gypsies, language of the, 70.

H.

Heat, nature of, 32.
,, store of, inside the earth, 34.
Heaven and Earth, creation of, by Brahma, 25.
,, ,, as father and mother, 101-104.
Hebrew language, source of, 208.
Hel, Hela, goddess, 133, 222.
Hercules and Cacus, myth of, 105.
Hindu legend of the Creation, 24.
,, funeral hymn, 156.
,, Trinity, 159.
Hinduism, ancient and modern, 142-164.
,, present condition of, 164.
Hindus, ancient prayer of the, 150.
,, ,, belief of, in a future life, 155.
Hira, Mount, 216, 233.
Holy Grail, 116.
Homa-offering, 171.
Horse, sacred, 136.
Human sacrifice, 79, 136.
Huxley, Professor, quoted, 37.

I.

Ice Age, 56, 92.
Il, Ilu, a Semitic god, 208.
Ilâh, 209.
Inanimate things, criminality of, 265.
Incarnation of Buddha, 281.
,, Vishnu, 160, 274.
India, races in, 140, 163.
Indo-European, *see* Aryan.
Indra, myth of, 105.
,, Vedic god of the sky, 147, 149.
,, birth of, 147.
,, hymn to, 149.
Infants exposed, 79, 81.
Inscriptions in 'Kent's Hole,' 59.
Inspiration of the Bible, etc., 242.
,, defined, 247.
,, theories of, 242.
Institutes of Manu, 24, 271.
Iron Age, 86.
Ishmael, Arab legend of, 222.
'Islám,' meaning of, 211.
Islám, doctrines of, 224.
,, spread of, 230, 238.
,, wars of, 227.

J.

Jah, Jahveh (Jehovah), 209.
Jainas, Hindu sect of, 163.
Játaka (Buddhist fables), 280.
Jewish history, importance of, 210.
,, legends of the creation, 13-15.
,, ,, of man, 49-50.
,, ,, Adam and Eve, 48.
,, ,, relation of, to other legends, 18, 261.
,, Sabbath, origin of, 20.
,, religion, influence of, on Islám, 219, 221.
Jews, captivity of, in Babylon, 174.
,, Mohammad's overtures to the, 227.
,, settlement of, in Arabia, 218.
Jovis, same as Dyaus, etc.
Judgment, day of, 171, 230, 249.
Juggernaut, 162.
Jupiter, 102, 120.
Jutes, 137.

K.

Kaabah, sacred stone of the, 215, 218, 221.
Kali, Hindu goddess, 161.
Kansa, Hindu demon-king, 161.
Kapilavastu, 178.
'Kent's Hole,' deposits in, 58.
,, ,, probable age of, 60.
,, inscriptions in, 59.
Kiblah, 227.
'King's,' sacred books of the Chinese, 202, 284-286.
Korân, contents of the, 232.
,, quotations from the, 223, 234-236.
Koreish, Arab tribe of the, 215.
Krishna, Vishnu's avatár as, 161.
,, worship of, 162.
K'ung-Foo-Tse, *see* Confucius, 199.

L.

Lake dwellings, 87.
Language and race, 67.
Languages, Aryan, 69.
,, ,, words common to, 71.
,, Semitic, 207.
Lao-tse, 198.
Laplace, 264.
Latin language, 70.
Law of attraction, 31, 33.
,, Grimm's, 71.
,, primitive, 85.
Laws of Manu, 24, 271.
Lear, King, 123.
Legend of Creation, Babylonian, 22, 261.
,, ,, Egyptian, 23.
,, ,, Greek, 27.
,, ,, Hindu, 24.
,, ,, Jewish, 13-15.
,, ,, Persian, 23.
,, ,, Scandinavian, 25.
Legends of birth of Buddha, 280.
,, creation of man, 23, 49, 94.
,, Flood, 263.
,, Man's happy state, 44-47.
,, Mohammad, 212.
,, relation between Jewish and Chaldean, 261.
Limestone caverns, 57.
Lithuanian language, 68.
Loki, 130, 133.
Lyall, Sir A., 164, 268.

M.

Magic hatchets, scissors, etc., 107.
Mahâbhârata, 275.
'Man,' meaning of, 50.
Man, antiquity of, in Europe, 55.
,, difference between, and brute, 50. 55.
,, legends of creation of, 23, 26, 49, 94.
,, supposed birthplace of, 54.
Man's happy state, legends of, 44-47.
Mantras or hymns, 271.
Manu, Laws or Institutes of, 24, 271.
Mars, surface of the planet, 42.
Maruts, Vedic storm-gods, 147.
Mazdâ, *see* Ahura-Mazdâ.
Mead, 75. 129.
Mecca, 215.
Mecca, origin of, 222.
Medina, grave reserved for Christ at, 220.
Melech, a Semitic god, 209.
Men, early races of, in Europe, 62.
Mencius, 285.
Messiah, the Persian, 171.
Meteors, origin of, 31.
Midyard, 133.
Milky Way, the, 11.
Mistletoe, 100, 131.
Mitra, Vedic sun-god, 145.
Mohammad, sketch of the life of, 215-228.
,, teaching of, 220-224.
Mohammadanism, *see* Islâm.
Moloch, a Semitic god, 209.
Mongol race, 189.
Mongolian legend of the first men, 46
Monks, Buddhist, 194.
Moon, Greek notion of size of, 11.
,, -plant, *see* Soma.
,, -worship, 122.
Moons, cooling of, 34.
,, once white-hot, 30.
,, origin of, 30.
Mother, earth addressed as, 101, 156.
Muir, Dr, quoted, 272.
Müller, Max, quoted, 152, 163, 173, 179, 278.
'Muslim,' meaning of, 211.
Myth, origin of, 105.
,, of the dawn, 101.
Myths, Aryan, 105-113.
,, Semitic, 261.
,, concerning a happy past, 44-47.

N.

Nats, Buddhist abode of, 280.
Nature, personification of, 90.
,, -worship, Aryan, 92.
Nebulæ, 42.
Nebular theory of origin of solar systems, 29-31, 264.
New Stone Age, 62, 73.
Nirvâna, 191.
Nudd, ocean-god, 122.
Numbers, sacred, 20, 21.

O.

Oak as sacred, 93, 99.
Oceans; how formed, 35.

Odin, 27, 102, 119, 129, 131, 134, 137.
Œdipus, myth of, 112.
Old Stone Age, 61.
Old Testament, low morals in, 229, 269.
Om, symbol of Hindu Trinity, 159.
Ordeal, trial by, 85.
Origin of myth, 105.
,, the solar system, 29-31, 264.
Ormuzd, Persian god of light, 23, 47, 166.
Oxygen in the earth's crust, 41.

P.

Pagan survivals, 82, 100, 115, 118, 135, 221.
Pali language, the, 282.
Pârsîs, 23, 165.
,, belief of, in a future life, 170, 172.
,, fire-worshippers, so-called, 172.
,, legend of a happy past, 45.
Persia, ancient importance of, 173.
Persian legend of the Creation, 23.
,, ,, first man and woman, 47.
Personification of nature, 90.
Pitaka, *see* Tripitaka.
Planets, origin of the, 30.
,, cooling of, 34.
,, once suns, 34.
Polynesian idea of foreigners, 14.
Prayer to Varuna, a Vedic god, 153.
,, Korân on, 223, 235.
Priestcraft, origin of, 102.
Primitive beliefs, 90.
Prithivî, Vedic earth-god, 147.
Proctor, R. A., on origin of solar system, 264.
Purânas, 276.

R.

Races, earliest, of men in Europe, 61, 63.
Râma, 274.
Râmâyana, 274.
Religion of ancient Celts, 119-126.
,, ,, Egyptians, 248.
,, ,, Greeks, 249.
,, ,, Romans, 250.
,, ,, Teutons, 127-141.
Religion of barbaric races, 90.
,, Buddhist, 177-195.
,, Hindu, 142-164.
,, Mohammadan, 211-236.
,, Pârsî, 165-176.
,, Christian, relation of, to other religions, 252.
Religions of China, 196-206.
Resurrection, 171, 230.
Revelation, book-, 237.
Rig-Veda, 145, 271.
,, contents of, 271.
,, gods addressed in, 145.
Rishis, Vedic poets, 144.
River-gods, 121.
Rivers; how formed, 35.
Roman Catholicism and Buddhism, likeness between, 194.
Rome, religion of ancient, 250.
Rumpelstiltskin, 112.

S.

Sabbath, origin of the, 20.
,, Mohammadan, 227.
Sacred books of the Brahmans, 271-277.
,, Buddhists, 282-284.
,, Chinese, 202, 284-286.
,, Mohammadans, 232.
,, Pârsîs, 166, 278.
,, Teutons, 127.
,, belief in the inspiration of, 238.
Sacred numbers, 20.
,, stone of the Kaabah, 215, 218, 221.
Sacred tree, 98.
,, of the Buddhists, 174, 183, 274.
Sacrifice, 79, 81.
St George and the Dragon, myth of, 106.
Sâkya-Muni (Buddha), 178.
Sâma-Veda, 272.
Sanhitâ or collection, 271.
Sanskrit language, 70.
,, Vedic, value of, 65.
,, word for 'sin,' 152.
Satan, *see* Devil.
Saturn, moons and rings of, 30.
Savages, nature-myths among, 90.
Saxons, 137.

Scandinavian legend of the Creation, 25.
Scandinavian religion, 115.
Seas: how formed, 35.
'Semitic,' meaning of, 207.
Semitic languages, 207.
,, nations, 207-210.
,, mythology, 261.
,, race, gods of the, 208.
Serpent-worship, 48.
Servian legend, 80.
Seven, choice of, as a sacred number, 20.
,, legends connected with, 21.
Shamanism, 90.
Shoo, Chinese Classics, 203.
Siddârtha (Buddha), 178.
Sigurd and Fafnir, myth of, 106.
Sikhs, 163.
'Sin' in Sanskrit, 152.
Siva, one of the Hindu Trinity, 159.
,, described, 161.
,, worship of, 161, 276.
Slavonic language, 70.
Sleipnir, 131.
'Smriti,' meaning of, 145.
Solar systems, origin of, 29-31, 264.
Soma, offering of the, 129, 148, 272.
,, as a god, 148, 171.
Sosiosh, the Persian Messiah, 171.
Spectroscope, the, 41.
Spirits, worship of departed, 136, 197.
'Sruti,' meaning of, 145.
Stalagmite floors of caverns, formation of, 58.
Stars, matter in the, and suns the same, 42.
Stone Age, 62.
,, sacred, of the Kaabah, 215, 218, 221.
,, circles, 141.
,, tools and weapons, 54, 255.
Stonehenge, 100.
Sudras, 158.
Sun, origin of the, 30.
,, cause of globe-shape of, 31.
,, myth of the, 129.
,, -gods in the Veda, 145.
,, -worship, 101.
Sûrâhs of the Korân, 233.
Sûrya, Vedic sun-god, 145.
Sûtras, 273.
Suttee, 78.

T.

Tacitus, 136.
Tantras, 276.
Taoism, 198.
Tartarus, 28.
Tatars, 73.
Temples in groves, 95.
,, absence of, among the Aryans, 136.
,, ,, Zoroastrians, 171.
Temptation of Buddha, 181.
Ten Commandments of Buddha, 192.
Tertiary rocks, 56.
Teutonic languages, 69.
,, religion, 127-141.
Thor, 130, 137.
Tibetan legend of the first men, 46.
,, monasteries, 195.
Tiu, same as Dyaus, Deus, 102.
Totem, 126, 136.
'Tower of Silence,' Pârsi, 172.
Tree, sacred, of the Buddhists, 190, 281.
Tree-worship, 92, 136.
Trees, men made from, 93.
Trial by ordeal, 85.
,, of animals and lifeless objects as criminals, 51, 265.
'Trimûrti,' meaning of, 159.
Trinity, Hindu, 159.
Tripitaka, 184, 282-286.
Tuesday, origin of, 102.
Tylor, Dr E. B., quoted, 265, 270.

U.

Upanishads, 271, 274.
Uranus, 28, 104.
Ushas, goddess of the dawn, 145.
,, hymn to, 150.

V.

Valhall (Hall of the Chosen), 134.
Varuna, Vedic god, 145, 151.
,, hymns and prayers to, 152. 153.
Vasishtha, a Vedic poet, 151.
'Veda,' meaning of, 144.
Vedângas, 273.
Vedas, 13, 65, 73, 144, 152, 271, 273.
,, gods invoked in, 145.

Vedas, nature and value of, 144.
,, words of, counted, 144.
Vedic religion, the, 155.
Vendetta, 84.
Vermin, Pârsî hatred of, 168.
Vikings, 79, 129, 135.
Vishnu, incarnations of, 159, 160.
,, Vedic sun-god, 168.
,, one of the Hindu Trinity, 145.
Vritra, the dragon, 105, 148, 168.

W.

Wars of Mohammad, 229.
Wealth in Cattle, 73.
Weeks, origin of, 21.
'Wheel of the law,' 182.
Wife, Mohammad's first, 216, 226.
Wisdom, Well of, 129.
Witches and witchcraft, origin of belief in, 175.
Wives, Aryan, 77.
Words common to the Aryan races, list of some, 71.
Worship, Buddhist forms of, 194.
Worship, Pârsî forms of, 171.
,, of ancestors, 136, 197.
,, of bull, 162.
,, of oak, 99.
,, of the serpent, 48.

Y.

Yagur-Veda, 272.
Yama and Yami, the first pair, 154.
Yima, King, 45, 155.
Ymir, the Frost-giant, 26.

Z.

Zarathustra, *see* Zoroaster.
Zemzem, the well, 222.
Zend (so-called) language, 70.
Zend-Avesta, 23, 166.
,, contents of the, 278
Zeus, 46, 100, 104.
,, same as Dyaus, 102.
Zoroaster, 139, 165.
Zoroastrianism, 165-176.

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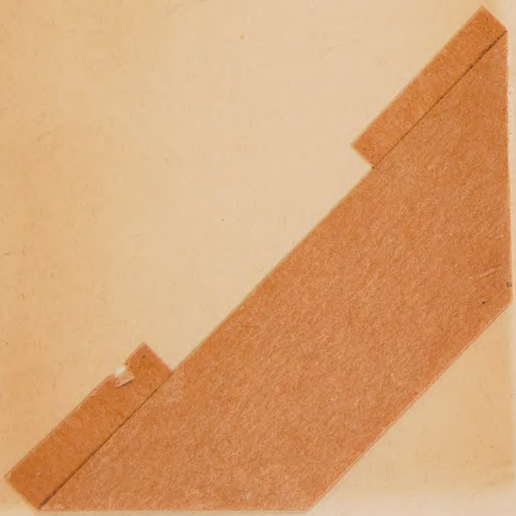

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